CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

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The Beaver

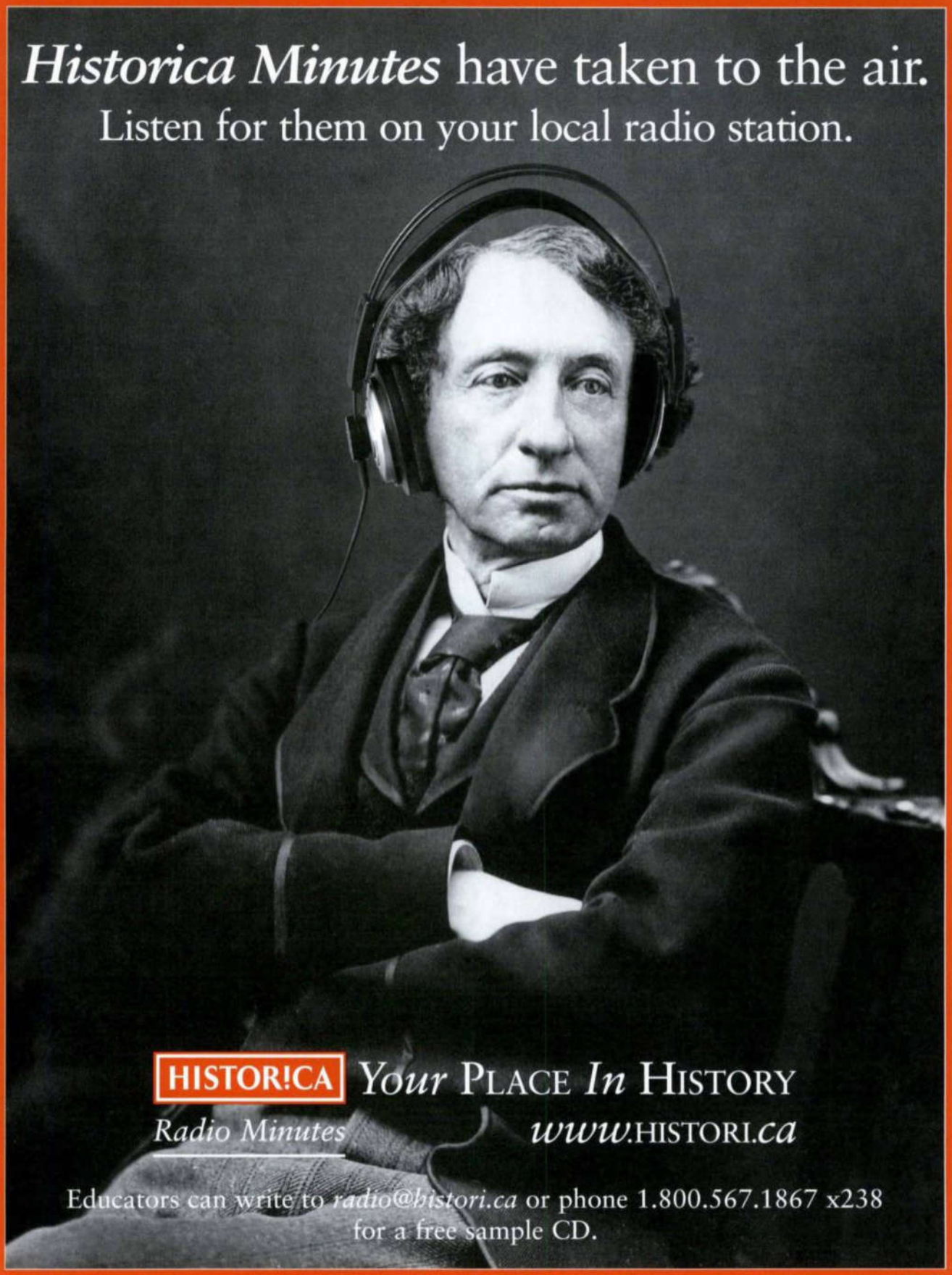
$5.95 December 2003 | January 2004

Simon Newcomb's Journey

Ginseng Rush
New France & the China connection

Driving Miss Purity

The Lost Patrol: Peril in the Arctic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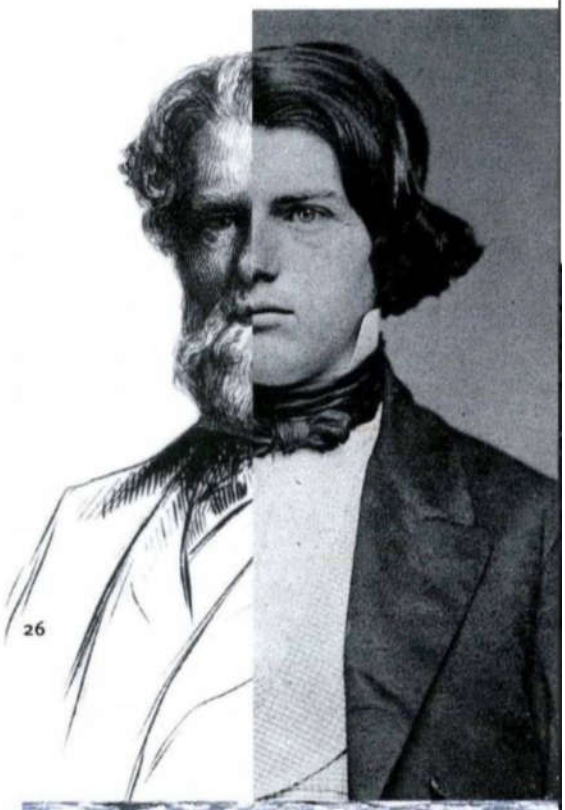

On the cover: General Sam Hughes. National Archives of Canada / C-2468.

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The Beaver
CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

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Rolph Huband, Publisher Emeritus

Founded in 1994 to popularize Canadian history, the work of Canada's National History Society includes **The Beaver** magazine, the **Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History** to honour the country's best history teachers, and the **Pierre Berton Award** to recognize those who have brought history to a wider audience.

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The Beaver was founded in 1920 by the Hudson's Bay Company, whose commitment to the History Society and its programs continues today through the ***Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation***.

Letters

Piece of the past

I enjoyed the article on the R-100 dirigible [August/September 2003]. An exciting part of the flight was omitted from the story, however.

As it reached Canada, the airship ran into a severe storm over Île Verte, near Quebec City. She encountered severe turbulence caused by cold air from the hills, then oscillated violently, causing two fabric rips in the lower vertical fin 0.9 metres long, while the outer edge of the starboard horizontal fin was split over a 3.7-metre length. A hazardous two-hour mission was required by eight riggers engaged in mid-air acrobatic "wire-walking" to do a temporary repair. As well, she ran into a second storm above Trois-Rivières, Quebec. She was fortunate to have completed the trip, arriving in Montreal on Friday August 1, 1930 and covering 6,225 kilometres in 78 hours, 49 minutes.

My father was at St. Hubert Airport during the arrival and was able to retrieve a piece of the fabric covering that had torn from the fins. It was made of high-strength, fine long-staple Egyptian cotton and still retains the doping and aluminum paint that was applied to it. I have a small section of the fabric in my scrapbook, making me the proud owner of a small piece of the history of the flight.

ALFRED MOORE
KANATA, ONTARIO

Creation clarification

Thank you so much for the excellent and enthusiastic review of *Captured in Stone: Carving Canada's Past*, by R. Eleanor Milne, K. Barbara Lambert, and Eleanor Moore [August/September 2003].

Just a point of clarification: R. Eleanor Milne was Dominion Sculptor for thirty-one years (from 1962 to 1993). During that time, between 1962 and 1974, The History of Canada Series was created.

ELEANOR MOORE
OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Defending the facts

In reference to Mr. Chandler's letter ["Too much fiction," p. 2, October/November 2003], I agree that there was no Ville Marie in 1613. However, his other arguments are debatable.

Champlain's estimation of the Rideau Falls may well have been an error, perhaps because he usually wrote his journals well after his journeys. He did portage around the falls.

The lodestone was used by Thomas, an unknown youth.

Iron kettles, coveted by the Algonquins, were traded several years before 1613.

As Mr. Chandler states, "We will likely never know exactly what happened." Indeed, none of us were witness to the events. We can only learn from the writings left to us, supported by an occasional original document that has survived the test of time.

ADRIENNE LEDUC
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

More fact and fiction

Ben Maycock's article about the privateer schooner *Liverpool Packet* [June/July 2003] was a handsomely illustrated and well-crafted summary of the career of this remarkable vessel. Unfortunately Mr. Maycock repeats as fact an imaginary account of the sale of *Liverpool Packet* first presented by the journalist Charles Henry J. Snider in the 1920s and recycled by subsequent authors. The schooner was not an ex-Spanish slave ship sold for £420 pounds at the Spread Eagle Tavern in November 1811. While the tavern was real enough, records of the Vice Admiralty Court for the fall of 1811 and Halifax newspapers show no such auction, in fact no ship auctions at all at the Spread Eagle or any other tavern. Captured vessels in the fall of 1811 were auctioned wharf-side, and these same records show that the *Liverpool Packet* was a former American slave ship, the schooner *Severn*, auctioned at Belcher's Wharf on October 28, 1811, and purchased by Enos Collins for £325 pounds. The imaginary Spread Eagle auction comes from Snider's classic 1928 book about Canadian privateering *Under the Red Jack*, which mixes much good archival research with large amounts of imagined dialogue and invented colour. For readers seeking a more careful scholarly study of the career of *Liverpool Packet* and Nova Scotia's other privateers, Faye Kert's fine book, *Prize and Prejudice: Privateering and Naval Prize*

***The Beaver* welcomes readers' comments.** E-mail us at <editors@historysociety.ca> or write to *The Beaver*, 478–167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0T6 Canada. Please include your address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

Editor's Note

Last April when we reported the results of our readership survey, we wanted to provide you with a sense of the *Beaver* community of readers – who they are, what they're curious about, what Canadian history means to them. But the survey didn't fully reflect the ongoing dialogue we share with readers every day.

This issue of the *Beaver* does, we hope. You'll notice some changes in this issue that address many of the things you've told us you're interested in; we've responded in ways that we think you'll enjoy.

The first thing you'll notice is our new typeface – designed for maximum readability. Next is an expanded front section. Currents now brings you more news about the history initiatives that are taking place in your communities, as well as other history tidbits. It also encompasses some new departments. In Living History, you can read about people whose vocations or avocations involve them in history in their daily lives. In Paper Trail, you'll see and read about fascinating documents from the country's rich archives. Oldways looks at how people worked and played in days of greater self-reliance, and features recipes, home remedies, gardening tips, and the like. You'll also find regulars such as Explorations, where we look at current events in the context of the past, Artifact, in which objects from Canadian museums reveal the social history of a time and place, and Moment, where we recount a singular event or incident that heralded a great change.

In the back of the magazine, you'll find more, too. Our regular departments – Reviews, Encounter, Christopher Moore, and Album – are joined by a new travel feature, Getaway. Our writers explore great travel destinations, featuring history-linked attractions, for both distance and own-backyard adventurers. And over the years, we've been struck by the many *Beaver* readers who've been participants in or observers of the important events and great characters of Canadian history. Your Story features readers' accounts of these deeds and perceptions. (For more information on contributing, see editorial guidelines on our website <www.thebeaver.ca>.) History Matters replaces our Society page, bringing you news from Canada's National History Society, publisher of the *Beaver*, and coordinator of other important history initiatives, including the Pierre Berton Award and Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History, among others.

In the middle section of the magazine, we bring you feature articles that present the full range of Canadian history.

Though we've leavened this time-honoured magazine with some new elements, we remain focussed on giving you, our readers, what you want at the level of quality you've come to expect. No doubt you'll let us know what you think. As always, we look forward to continuing the conversation.

in Atlantic Canada in the War of 1812 (International Maritime Economic History Association, 1997), is highly recommended.

DAN CONLIN
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

ERRATA Due to an error in cataloguing, the Saskatchewan Archives apologizes for the incorrect photograph captioned as Woodrow S. Lloyd in James Pitsula's article, "The Courage of Her Convictions," [p. 31, October/November 2003]. The correct identity of the gentleman in the photograph is John Taylor Douglas, Minister of Highways from 1944 to 1960. Mr. Lloyd appears at left.

The painting *The Second Battle of Ypres*, which appeared on pp. 16–17, was mistakenly printed in reverse, rendering the soldiers pictured therein left-handed. Thanks to alert reader (and right-hand man) Michael Montcombroux of Inwood, Manitoba. *The Beaver* regrets the error.

More Letters The redesigned Beaver website offers a new section for letters to the editor. To see letters that may only be available online, go to <www.thebeaver.ca>, and click on "Extra! Extra!" to get to the "Letterbox" section.

RECLAMATION

Porsche and Parliament

During December, Toronto hopes to move the first of two outstanding properties that contain the archaeological ruins of Upper Canada's first Parliament back into public hands so the site can become a premier historic destination.

"We had the ultimate challenge," says Councillor Pam McConnell, whose Toronto Centre-Rosedale ward encompasses the site. Working with the local Citizens of the Old Town, she started urging Toronto City Council to acquire the site in 1997.

Their work, supported by many, finally paid off in late September. Just before their fall elections, City Council passed a motion and the Province of Ontario passed an order-in-council to facilitate the complicated land swap that will see 265 Front Street East go to the Heritage Foundation of Ontario rather than become a Porsche dealership.

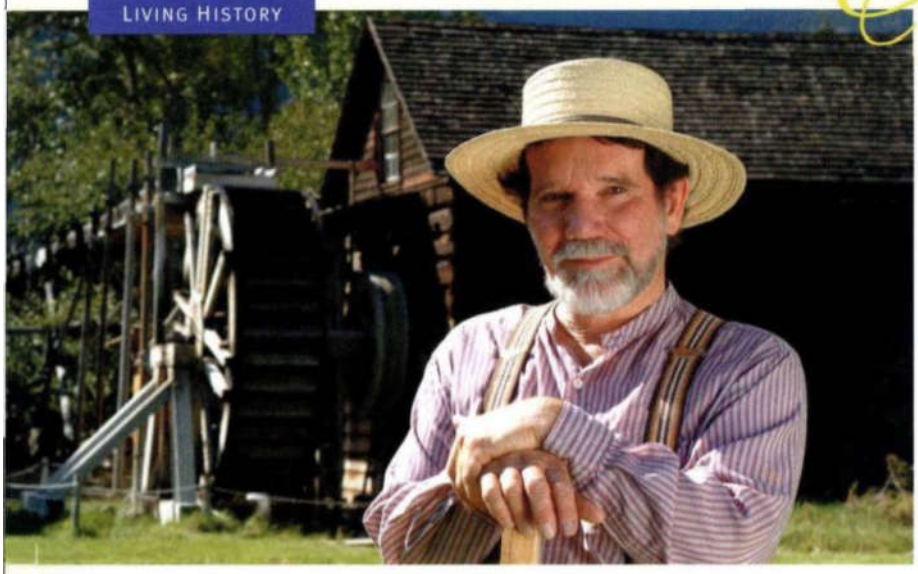
"It was an opportunity for us to give a legacy to the future," says McConnell. "The window didn't open for long, so we had to buckle down and get busy."

Upper Canada's First Parliament opened in 1797, but the Americans burned it plus Fort York's Government House in 1813 during the War of 1812. The British retaliated by burning the Congress and presidential mansion in Washington in 1814. The whitewashed mansion later became known as the White House.

"This is a nationally and internationally significant property," says the chair of Heritage Toronto, Peter Carruthers. "The Americans are very interested in this site, too. We've had good support from the American Consulate."

Late nineteenth-century rendering of Upper Canada's first Parliament from J. Ross Robertson's 1894 book *Landmarks of Toronto*, showing wooden construction. Archival records and archaeological research indicate, however, that the two twenty-foot by forty-foot, one-and-a-half-storey buildings were brick.

LIVING HISTORY



Cuyler Page, the impetus behind the restoration of a grist mill in British Columbia that dates back to 1877, the only one of its kind west of Ontario.

A few visits to British Columbia, and he was hooked. Architect Cuyler Page, now 63, was studying in Arizona under Paolo Soleri, famous for his futuristic architectural vision, when he travelled to Vancouver in the 1960s to accompany an exhibit of the renowned architect. He fell in love with the city, and soon after, took his career north to the West Coast locale and became a Canadian citizen. Page's architectural work eventually led him to the provincial interior, to the Okanagan region where he was involved in the creation of museum exhibits and found that the work allowed him to do the three things he enjoyed most: designing, building, and educating.

In 1986, Page was awarded a contract with the British Columbia Heritage Trust that would shape his career for the next seventeen years. He would devote countless hours to the recreation of The Grist Mill and Gardens at Keremeos, a site established by pioneers in 1877 to process flour for the local ranchers, aboriginals, miners, and travellers on the historic Dewdney Trail. The site was abandoned in the early 1890s for more than fifty years, and was later used to keep chickens and as an artist's studio. Today, thanks to Page, it is a restored historic site and a popular Canadian tourist attraction.

Page was destined to do the work to which he is committed today. Growing up in Ithaca, New York, with Cornell University as his childhood playground, his parents took him to museums and historic sites regularly, and Page believed that these activities were a natural part of weekly life. In his adult life, this has translated into a dedication to preserving history through his profession, one that is motivated by his desire to provoke in others appreciation, curiosity, and thoughtfulness. And motivated he is. In addition to managing the site, Page holds a full-time position as museum curator at the Kamloops Museum and Archives.

Page wants to share with others what he feels is an experience of who we are as people by examining what existed before us: "One of the most important aspects of public monuments and historic sites is that they function as tangible reminders of our civic culture, of the particular civilization to which we belong."

The site at Front and Parliament Streets sits on four parcels of land. The city owns the parking lot at 25 Berkeley Street East and the adjacent parkland, but 265 and 271 Front Street East were privately held. Peter Kircher, who owns Porsche-Downtown Fine Cars, bought 265 Front in 1998 to move his dealership there by the end of this year.

In 2001, the property owners and the city financed an archaeological dig to test the site. Ron Williamson, chief archaeologist of Archaeological Services Inc., didn't expect to find much since the site had also been home to the second, larger Parliament buildings, opened in 1820, but accidentally destroyed by a chimney fire in 1824. The Home District Gaol occupied it from 1840 to 1887, and Consumers' Gas Company of Toronto, which manufactured coal gas, owned it from 1879 to 1964. Since then, it's been used for auto-related businesses, including the current car wash and car rental agency.

But when Williamson tested what had been a relatively undisturbed part of the courtyard, he discovered burned floor boards, bricks, and ceramics, all dating to the late 1700s. "It was exciting archaeologically to find these materials," he says. The Ontario Municipal Board still gave the dealership the right to develop the property after December 1, 2002, so the heat was on for a deal. Steve Diamond, Kircher's lawyer, notes progress was slow, but all parties had agreed in principle by mid-October, with the Porsche dealer moving to another downtown location.

"Everyone had to think totally out of the box," Councillor McConnell says. "But we came up with a really exhilarating, creative solution."

Once the ink dries, work will begin to get the last property into public hands and develop a proper commemoration for this historic site. "We all view this," says Williamson, "as a victory in a battle of a long war."

— Noelle Boughton

Information on Upper Canada's first Parliament is available at <www.firstparliament.ca>.

COLLECTIBLE

Coming soon (maybe): Brian Mulroney

They're called action figures, but we're not sure how much action Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, engaged in other than a little raising of the wrist. It matters not. Thanks to Nafekh Technologies of Montreal, Sir John A. is now an action figure, joining such other luminary castings in plastic as GI Joe, Darth Vader, and Spiderman. Six inches tall, complete with body-hugging five-button vest and a pair of lethal-looking pince-nez, this is one head of government you won't want to mess with – whether the issue is the National Policy, the transcontinental railway, or the trial of Louis Riel. The action figure, says the box it came in, is for those six years and older, but our guess is it's more of a collectible for those whose chronological age falls firmly into two digits. It's also the first in a Canadian Legends series of, well, Canadian legends, starting with prime ministers (next down the pike: Sir Wilfrid Laurier) then going on to Canadian explorers, athletes, musicians, and no doubt in time, magazine editors – two or three new figures released every four months or so. Sir John A. comes with a twenty-page bilingual booklet outlining his life and times, so the novelty is not without educational value. At $19.99, he's cheaper than Barbie (and little girls might find him useful as Barbie's grandfather), and you don't have to keep shelling out for the wardrobe. More information is available at <www.canadianlegends.ca>.

ACQUISITION

Cheque, please!

One imagines even the most diligent of corporate entities eventually discharges its paper clutter, lest it accumulate and smother its employees or become a firetrap. Not so the Hudson's Bay Company. Somehow a cheque the company wrote in 1690 to one of its employees, an esteemed sea captain named Michael Grimington, has survived intact for over three hundred years. Recently acquired by Ottawa's Canadian Currency Museum, the cheque is for the sum of thirty pounds, which was no small beer in the seventeenth century. In fact, CMC chief curator Paul Berry has noted that one English pound at the time could buy about 480 pints of beer. This means that if a pint of beer in England today costs about two pounds (and it does) and if an English pound is worth about $2.20 Canadian, then the sum paid to Captain Grimington would be roughly equivalent to $63,000 today. Nice work if you can get it. And Grimington got it. He sailed for the HBC at a time when England and France were slugging it out in Hudson Bay for control

PAPER TRAIL

George William Allan, K.C., (1860–1940) came from a prominent Toronto family whose name is commemorated in the city's Allan Gardens. After graduation from Trinity College, he came to Winnipeg, where

in 1882 he set up a law partnership. In 1925, he became chairman of the Canadian Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, and from 1926–1940 served as president of Great-West Life. In the course of his long and active life, Allan came to be known as "The Grand Old Man of the West."

It was Allan's usual practice to send out between four and five thousand Christmas cards. In 1932, unable to make his preparations in time, he hastily devised an interior only and sent copies to about a hundred of his friends and business contacts, including HBC governor Patrick Ashley Cooper. Allan was a shrewd old man – rich, conservative, upper class, who knew everybody who was anybody in both Western and Eastern Canada – and he had no illusions about the financial mess that Canada was in during the Depression and how tough it would be to get out of it.

But life had taught him the wisdom of acceptance and the importance of optimism. He told his friends that he was prepared to prophesy Canada's comeback "notwithstanding the fact that all the prophets on the North American continent were dead, that the sons of the prophets had hunted for holes, found them, crawled in and pulled the hole after them and that I had sold the wheat from my Saskatchewan farm for the lowest price since King Charles granted a Charter to the Gentleman Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay."

He may have been a venerable director of several prominent companies, the friend of Canada's great and good, but he was able to make light of a dire situation and poke fun at himself. The man in the photo with the holes in the seat of his pants, his arms raised in mock prophecy over the stooks, is none other than Allan himself.

Our thanks to Anne Morton, Head of Research & Reference at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, who provided the document and information.

God's own country, the Golden West.
George W. Allan

The interior of a Christmas card, enclosed in a letter dated Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, 30 December 1932, from George W. Allan, chairman of the Canadian Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, to Patrick Ashley Cooper, the company's governor, in London. The hole at the top was made when the card was filed in the London office.

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY ARCHIVES / ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA / A 74/43

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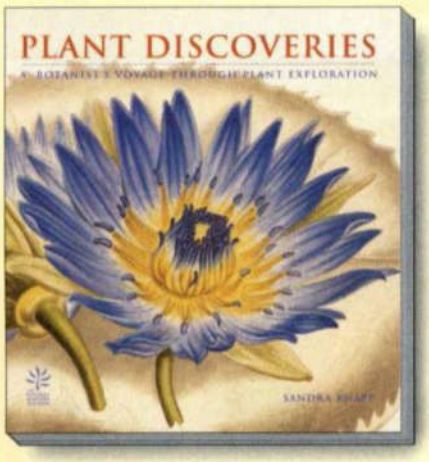
Sandra Knapp



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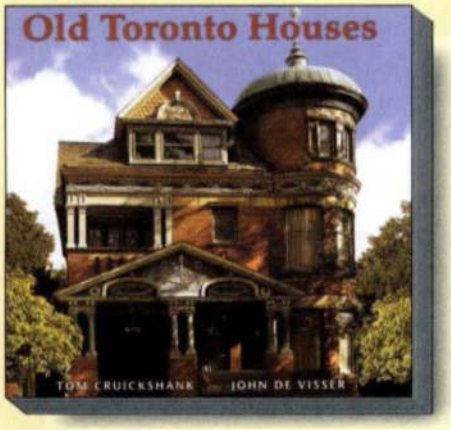

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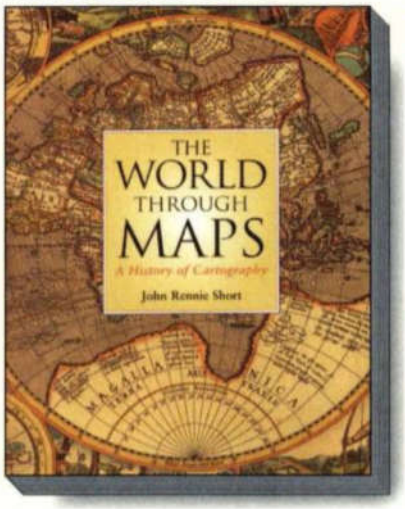

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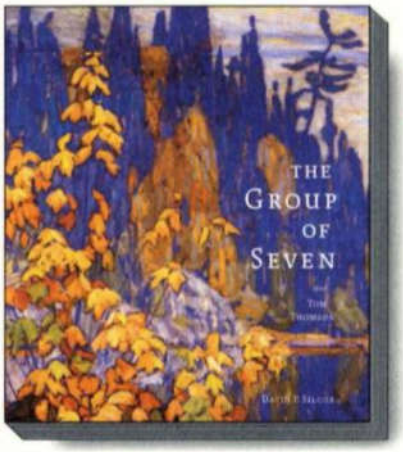

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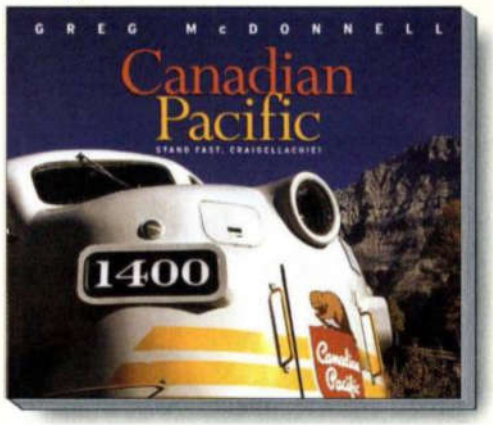

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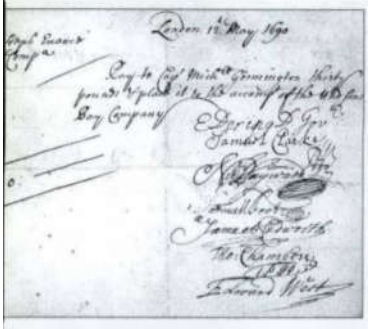


of the lucrative fur trade and earned a reputation for skill and loyalty. The money, historians speculate, may have been compensation for enduring two years as a prisoner of the French after his ship was captured in the late 1680s.

FROM THE BEAVER FILES

The age of clean

By the 1920s, North Americans had actually become cleaner than they ever had before. Mechanization had eliminated many of the unsanitary, sweaty jobs of the past; electrification had replaced dirty coal stoves and kerosene lamps; while philanthropic efforts by various public-spirited people had effectively persuaded

the masses of the value of cleanliness. Ironically, this success was worrying for those who profited from the sale of soap. Thus was born in New York in 1927 the Cleanliness Institute, an initiative of the Association of American Soap and Glycerine Producers, which told people that they were still not clean *enough*.

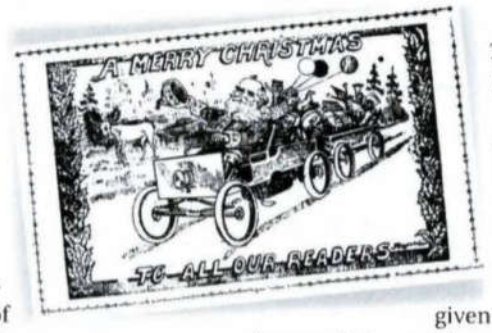
And so the culture of cleanliness, which began in earnest during the mid-nineteenth century, intensified. By the 1950s, when this photograph entered the *Beaver*'s files, it had reached its height. Wanting to further boost sales of soap and guarantee a future for their products, manufacturers through what was now called the Cleanliness Bureau made children (in addition to women) the target of their cleanliness campaign. There were direct appeals to hygiene, like admonitions to wash hands. And then there was the soft approach:

"What better way to keep the small fry occupied on a holiday afternoon than painting a Christmas mural on the living room mirror with easily removable 'suds-snow,'" says the accompanying Cleanliness Bureau press release. "Mom can whip up the artists' medium in a jiffy by mixing several cups of packaged soap or detergent with a minimum of water and using her electric mixer or rotary beater to bring it to the consistency of a thick meringue. ... After the holidays, the suds painting can be washed away with a damp cloth, leaving the mirror shining clean."

OLDWAYS

Before Martha Stewart, where did people look to find tips on how to make their celebrations extra-special? Well, during the Victorian era, it might have been their local newspaper or a book devoted to such a topic. These ideas certainly showed the lighter, and perhaps more silly, side of the festive season, but after all, who *doesn't* have enough bran to fill a bathtub?

From the Halifax Herald, *December 25, 1900:*
To Add to the Fun of Christmas Morning



The fun of Christmas morning may be very much enhanced if the gifts are distributed in some novel and surprising way. One such way of making fun is the Christmas pie. This is not an article to cause indigestion, though some of its contents may be very solid in character. Fill a small wooden washtub with sawdust or bran. Carefully wrap each package in tissue paper and tie with red ribbon. Put in all the gifts and from each one leave a long end of ribbon. When the tub is full, cover with bran, put on a white tissue paper crust, through which bring out the ends of the ribbons. On the end of each ribbon have the name of the one for whom the gift is intended. Decorate the outside of the tub with green tissue paper and stick a sprig of holly here and there. It's a case of "putting in your thumb and drawing out a plum," only you get the plum by pulling the ribbons bearing your name.

The Christmas ladder is another pretty idea. Decorate the rungs and sides with green and red tissue paper, and tie the gifts on each rung; on the top place a row of candles which may be lighted at night.

From The Book of Games with Directions How to Play Them *by Mary White. George N. Morang, Toronto: 1898:* ***New Year's Resolutions***

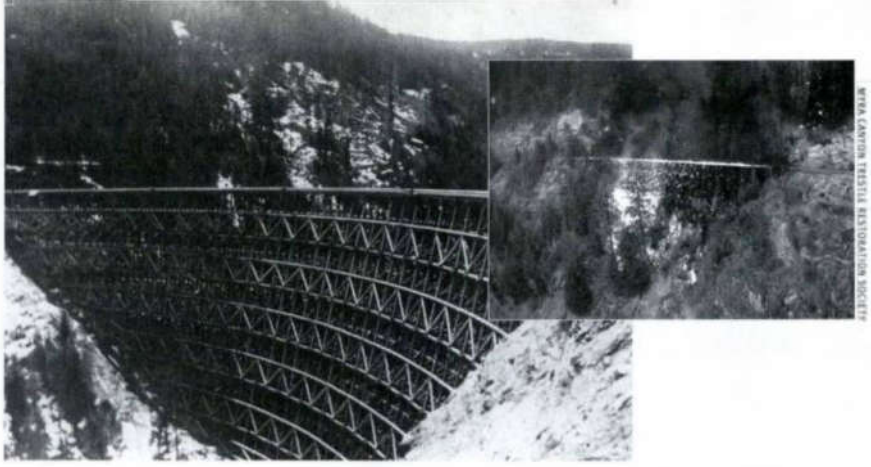
Material Required: As many pencils and sheets of paper as there are players.

For a New Year's party, or for one given within a few days of January 1st, a good suggestion is New Year's resolutions. Pencils and paper are brought out, and every guest is asked to write his or her resolutions for the new year; or, if preferred, to write someone else's resolutions (or those someone else ought to make), signed by that person. The papers are then folded, collected, and then drawn, one apiece, by the players, and each in turn read aloud the resolutions which have come to him or her. For example:

The first day of January, 18__, I resolve to follow these rules for the coming year:

I. If I can't be honest, I'll be as honest as I can.
II. I will chew no more taffy with my imported ivories.
III. I must walk with my right foot on the left side.
IV. I must stop smoking in my sleep; and,
V. Walk around the block before rising.

When second-wave feminism established itself in the 1960s, the obsession for "whiter than white" and "cleaner than clean" waned before the dual pressure of family and jobs. Despite advances in technology (dishwashers, central vacuum systems), middle-class homes were probably never cleaner than they were in 1959. And suds-snow rarely decorates mirrors at Christmas today. Who has the time to wash it off?



MYRA CANYON TRESTLE RESTORATION SOCIETY

RESTORATION

Trestle time

In the aftermath of what some are calling the worst forest fires to sweep through Western Canada in more than fifty years, volunteers are banding together in an effort to rebuild a valuable historic site in B.C.'s interior.

Before the summer of 2003, breathtaking vistas and spectacular engineering characterized Myra Canyon, a ten-kilometre stretch of the Kettle Valley Railway built between 1912 and 1914 near Kelowna. Towering fifty metres above the canyon floor, lofty wooden trestles and steel bridges were hung on the sides of this deep hole, allowing trains to zip across the mile-wide gorge with ease. By 1980, however, the train whistles ceased to blow – competition from highway travel forced the Canadian Pacific Railway to abandon the railway and its tracks were removed. The site remained an attraction for outdoor enthusiasts seeking impressive walking and biking trails, but in the early 1990s it was deemed unsafe and the provincial government planned to shut it down. Determined to keep the pathway open and safe, a dedicated group of people – The Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society – built boardwalks and guardrails on each of the trestles, and took it upon themselves to maintain the popular locale. Since then, the Myra Canyon has attracted more than 50,000 visitors and brought $5 million to the region every year. Experts consider the trestles to be among the best examples of early twentieth-century Canadian railway construction, and were declared a National Historic Site in 2002.

Today the task at hand is a much more daunting one – to completely recreate the trestles. The fires that ravaged the B.C. Interior last summer did not spare these national treasures. Twelve of the sixteen wooden trestles were destroyed and the two steel ones were severely damaged. The plan now is to reconstruct the trestles and restore the pathway through the area. The Restoration Society has developed a steering committee that is working along with the provincial government toward this goal with the support of the federal government, Trails B.C., and other organizations. An assessment of the damage to this world-famous site is underway, and an alternate route for travellers on the Trans Canada Trail is in development. It will likely be at least two years until the Myra Canyon trails will be reopened. Donations can be sent to the Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Fund, PBC Box 611, Kelowna, B.C., V1Y 7P2.

MOMENT

January 27, 1913: First light. Brooklyn-born young eccentric Clarence Birdseye is about to head out of Rigolet, the main post of the Hudson's Bay Company in Labrador, on an expedition. This is the first winter in Labrador for Clarence, intrepid young businessman and fur farmer. For the first time, he is about to become intimately acquainted with the properties of Labrador ice, cold, and wind.

The small expedition, takes a route along the west side of Back Bay, a long fiordlike arm of Hamilton Inlet. Soon, they are caught in a storm. Clarence's deerskin leggings freeze so stiff he can't bend his ankles. At last they find shelter and wait out the screeching gale in fireside comfort. The driver advises him to quickly change his wet moccasins. Should he go outside with wet feet, Clarence is told, they will freeze right through at their first exposure to the blistering wind.

Such mortal danger threatened by the elements had a profound effect on Birdseye's restless scientific mind.

COURTESY BIRDS EYE FOODS

FACTOID

Hello?? **It's the most common way to answer the phone. But it isn't what Canada's Alexander Graham Bell had in mind when he created the pivotal invention in 1876. Bell thought users should say "Ahoy" when answering a call. No one ever really said "Aye-aye, Captain" to that idea.**

Take the day off

December 6:
To commemorate the beginning of the 1837 Rebellion with William Lyon Mackenzie leading a force of eight hundred men down Yonge Street toward Toronto. Get organized.

December 9:
To mark the opening in 1755 in Halifax of the first post office in Canada. Consider the joy of philately.

January 2:
To note the 1929 agreement between Canada and the United States to preserve Niagara Falls. Buy a barrel.

January 18:
To reflect on Sir Wilfrid Laurier's oft-repeated claim 100 years ago that "the twentieth century belongs to Canada." Indulge in wishful thinking.

ARTIFACT

In 1943, in his second brilliant year with the Montreal Canadiens, Maurice "Rocket" Richard helped bring the Stanley Cup back to Montreal after a nineteen-year absence. That year, too, his wife Lucille gave birth to a daughter, the first of their seven children. To celebrate the arrival of his nine-pound baby girl, Richard asked coach Dick Irving Sr. to change his jersey number from 15 to the now famous 9.

That **number 9 jersey**, one of fifty-seven objects once owned by Richard now part of the Canadian Museum of Civilization's sports treasures collection, will be on display at *"Rocket" Richard: The Legend, The Legacy*, opening in April. Richard, who passed away in 2000, was not only an unrivalled hockey star and the most exciting player of his generation, but a symbol of strength and talent to the entire country. To French Canadians particularly, he was a champion and symbolic source of pride. The fifty goals he scored in fifty games during the 1944–1945 season was long hockey's most celebrated record. Richard's suspension from the game in 1955, which led to the worst sports riot in Canadian history, is now generally regarded as an early stirring of Quebec nationalism. When the Montreal Forum closed in 1996, Richard received the longest standing ovation in the city's history, and when he died more than 100,000 people filed past his coffin at centre ice in Molson Centre.

"He carried the flag for an entire

Months afterward, he wrote about the incident for a New York adventure publication, dwelling with almost poetic intensity upon the qualities of ice and cold. Later that same winter, he saw something that would fuel his growing obsession. "I saw natives catching fish in fifty below zero weather," he related, "which froze stiff almost as soon as they were taken out of the water. Months later when they thawed out, some of these fish were still alive."

Like a modern Frankenstein about to unlock the secrets of nature, Birdseye began devoting himself to years of experimentation to see if he could artificially recreate nature's so-perfect method of locking living tissues within preserving ice. During his time in Labrador, 1912 to 1915, he preserved his vegetables for the winter in the Inuit custom, sinking cabbages into brine and then exposing them to high winds. The key to effective freezing, he found, was speed. If the ice was allowed to melt, bacteria would grow and break down the organic matter the extreme cold had been protecting.

After he returned to the U.S., Birdseye set up many ad hoc experiments with food around his home. Some of these led to domestic conflict. His wife Eleanor once complained bitterly about live pickerel in the bathtub.

Clarence's initial monetary investment was small – an electric fan, a bucket of ice, and a bucket of brine. But as his experiments became more large-scale, he soon required backing. On July 31, 1923, Birdseye's first quick-freezing company was formed with a $20,000 subscription of stock and a freezing plant in New York. Soon the company grew with more stockholders and Clarence filed an increasing number of patents to protect his freezing methods.

In the early months of 1929, a food-processing company, Postum, honed in on Birdseye's company and bought it for $22 million – $20 million for the patents and $2 million for the other assets. Clarence Birdseye personally received slightly under $1 million and a unique kind of immortality in the food industry. Postum decided they wanted his name, split into two separate words.

"My contribution was to take Eskimo knowledge and the scientist's theories and adapt them to quality production," is how Birdseye himself summed up the story. His natural frankness, though skirting modern concepts like "expropriation of culture," at least acknowledged that "food" and "freezing" had always gone naturally together for the Inuit of Labrador.

Soon a way of life for the Inuit was to become a daring new invention for the middle-class of North America. On a cold March day in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1930, Birds Eye frozen foods – including peas, spinach, raspberries, loganberries, cherries, and assorted meats and fish – made their tentative debut in grocery shops. At first people were suspicious and sales were slow, but eventually the product caught on and revolutionized the entire food industry.

—Paul Butler

population – and that's pretty heavy," the *Montreal Gazette*'s Red Fisher said. "He felt he had to live up to that responsibility and he did it the way he knew how – by scoring goals and responding to every challenge on the ice."

More information is available from the Museum of Civilization, <www.civilization.ca>.

On Record

Five or six drunks are in the police station as a result of an over-indulgence on Christmas Day. The mayor will doubtless lecture them this morning as to the impropriety of such conduct.

— From a Winnipeg newspaper dated December 27, 1880.

We were Caesars, being nobody to contradict us.

— Pierre-Esprit Radisson, French explorer and fur trader, journal of 1661, *The Explorations of Pierre-Esprit Radisson* (1961), edited by Arthur T. Adams.

Factoid

What's in a name? Well, in this case, a major typo. In 1922, Joseph-Armand Bombardier of Valcourt, Quebec, invented the first "snow machine" (known today as the snowmobile). He later improved the machine in 1959, calling it a Ski-Dog, but due to a spelling error in the patenting process, was officially named a Ski-Doo.

Doug Alexander on

Canada's Covert Biowarfare Program

Though Canada championed international conventions against biological and chemical weapons thirty years ago, and continues to do so in the post–September 11 era, it did for a time, play a key role in secret – and arguably illegal – research to weaponize the world's deadliest germs.

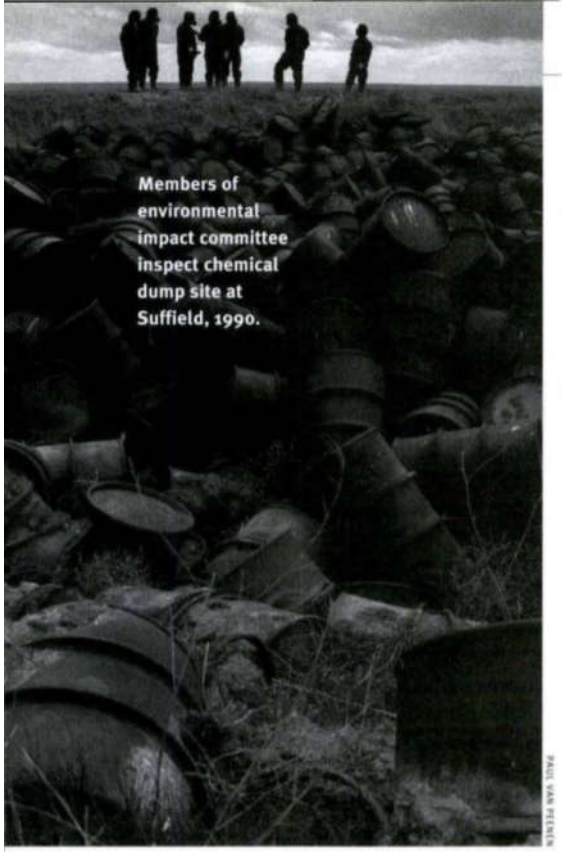
In the early days of the Cold War, the British government secretly ordered production of ten thousand biological bombs for use against civilian targets in the Soviet Union. The bombs, intended to contain "the most effective biological agent for the incapacitation of workers," were never built, although extensive trials in this deadly new field of warfare took place. And southeast Alberta provided a perfect cloak for Britain to clandestinely develop biological and chemical weapons during and after the Second World War, even though such research was banned under the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

It's common knowledge that a remote area known as Suffield, some fifty kilometres northwest of Medicine Hat, was used as a Canadian-British research centre for chemical and biological warfare from 1941 until the early 1950s. But it is only in the last three years – decades after the fact – that declassified British records have come to light that expose the full extent of Allied work at that time into this lethal form of warfare. Several "top secret" documents unearthed at the Public Records Office outside London show Canada's extensive involvement in developing offensive germ weaponry, even six years after the Second World War. One of the biggest revelations to emerge from these archives has been a 1946 request by Britain's air staff for a biological bomb, to be packed with anthrax, *yersinia pestis* (which causes the bubonic plague), or other deadly germs. By allowing the land around Suffield to be used to test delivery systems, Canada played a crucial part in this project.

Suffield had already been used two years previously to test weapons packed with brucellosis and tularaemia, bacteria that cause debilitating illness in humans. But this latest project put Suffield front and centre in Britain's latest foray into biowarfare, when such work was deemed too hazardous elsewhere. At the time the British needed further research and development on such weaponry, as well as a germ production plant and large tracts of land to test such weapons. Yet, according to a 1947 classified memo from Britain's Biological Research Advisory Board, the risks to American facilities were deemed "quite unacceptable at times of peace."

Not so for Canada. Suffield became the perfect choice for such research, and in 1950 and 1951, this Albertan research facility hosted field trials with "baby 4-lb bombs" using nonpathogenic simulants, basically substitutes that mimicked the spread of deadly agents. Spraying devices designed to spread viruses were also field tested during 1951, although Canadian scientists reported this technology "showed little promise."

More may have happened in Suffield that we don't know about. One Canadian researcher has suggested



Members of environmental impact committee inspect chemical dump site at Suffield, 1990.

PAUL VAN RIJSEN

The unearthing of declassified British documents that reveal Canada's participation in biowarfare research has made the Department of National Defence wary enough to investigate.

that live trials with anthrax and other germs were carried out at Suffield's Area E range during and after the war. Liberal MP John Bryden, a former journalist who penned the 1989 book *Deadly Allies: Canada's Secret War, 1937–1947*, points to declassified United States records to back up his claim. However, academic experts and the Canadian government are skeptical of his findings. Indeed, a report from Britain's biowarfare committee suggests Canada's reluctance to use live agents in the field.

Regardless, it's not that research into biochemical warfare was done on Canadian soil that's necessarily shocking – although some reported goings-on, including alleged testing of mustard gas on volunteer soldiers is enough to make one cringe – it's the fact that the work wasn't defensive. Britain, with help from Canada and the U.S., was developing weapons designed to unleash germs upon an unsuspecting civilian population.

Suffield clearly played a role in this work – contrary to long-standing claims by the Canadian government and military that "offensive" germ research didn't occur – as the declassified documents show. More disturbing, five decades later the government and military are still unclear of just what happened at Suffield during the Cold War under Britain's watch.

The unearthing of declassified British documents that reveal Canada's participation in biowarfare research, combined with Bryden's claims that anthrax was scattered across Suffield ranges, has made the Department of National Defence wary enough to investigate. It has hired historian Donald Avery, an expert on Canada's role in biochemical warfare, to uncover the truth and find out whether live anthrax was part of any field trials. His report is due in spring (March 2004). The historical scrutiny is a wise decision: a few thousand anthrax spores are enough to kill a human, and they are so small that a fatal dose could be placed on the period at the end of this sentence. These hearty spores can also survive some two hundred years.

It would be easy to accuse the British of foisting a controversial role on Canada in its push towards biowarfare. After all, Britain did drive the Allied efforts in this deadly new field during and after the war. Yet Canada's scientists and researchers were clearly willing to comply. In fact, Canadian scientist Frederick Banting helped convince the British to change their policy on germ warfare from that of defensive-oriented research to an offensive role after meeting British experts in January 1940 and submitting a report advocating bacterial warfare.

Canada's active participation in developing biological weapons began soon afterwards, when research facilities in Quebec and Alberta were established to support American and British work. At Grosse Île, an island downstream from Quebec City, scientists at a secret lab manufactured anthrax for weapons and worked on the design of bombs packed with rinderpest, a cattle virus. Academics at leading Canadian universities also researched the use of deadly viruses as lethal weapons.

Suffield's experimental station, with its open test range, was established after the British came to Canada in 1940. Although officially administered by the Canadian Army, it was effectively run by the British: the head, E.L. Davies, was a Brit who formerly oversaw experimentation work at Britain's Porton Down biochemical research centre in Wiltshire. Although British support of Suffield terminated in 1946, records show field trials for biological weapons continued under British guidance into the early 1950s. This despite the fact that Suffield's experimental station was taken over in 1947 by Canada's Defence Research Board, an agency later renamed Defence Research Establishment Suffield (DRE Suffield).

Canadian scientists knew what was happening, though. In 1949 Canadian delegates attended a biowarfare subcommittee meeting in Britain, where progress of Britain's biological bomb project and collaboration were discussed. Just how much of a say Canada had in these proceedings and the actual research is unknown, but clearly Britain exerted influence and control over Suffield long after the Second World War ended.

Even after the British abandoned its efforts to build a biological bomb in 1954, they were still scheming to use Suffield for its controversial activities. In the early 1970s Britain wanted Suffield as a place to train its troops in "defensive" chemical warfare. The scheme was suggested in 1972 by the British – without Canada being consulted – despite Canada's ongoing efforts to lobby the United Nations to outlaw chemical warfare.

Britain wanted to test the use of "chemical smoke" (tear gas), now commonly used among civilian police forces worldwide for riot control (although banned under international law for military use). British civil servants in Ottawa feared this would embarrass the Canadian government.

Opinions expressed in Explorations are the author's own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the *Beaver*.

Britain's lingering involvement in Suffield was already causing problems in the early seventies. British military presence was greeted with public resistance, notably protests over environmental concerns as well as Britain's entanglements in Northern Ireland (which had been heightened by the Bloody Sunday incidents on January 30, 1972, when British troops killed thirteen men at a civil rights march in Londonderry). One British bureaucrat warned that "the introduction of CS gas into the Suffield training would neatly combine both these emotive issues and might result in some unwelcome publicity."

His warning appears to have been heeded: Canada's Department of National Defence has no record of British troops receiving chemical warfare training at Suffield in the 1970s. By then, the idea of biological or chemical warfare had fallen out of international favour, thanks to the emergence of atomic weapons research and the UN's International Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention of 1972, which Canada wholeheartedly embraced.

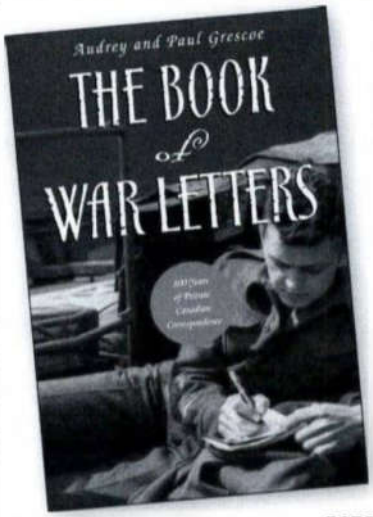
Britain's dabbling in biowarfare – at Canada's expense – during those Cold War years did, however, leave an important legacy for Canadians. The facilities established at Suffield have today made this Alberta facility one of the world's most important biological-chemical research centres. Canadian research in the defence *against* chemical and biological warfare has continued, ultimately providing Canadian Forces with defensive equipment that is among the best in the world. Over the years, DRE Suffield has generated a considerable, unmatched reservoir of knowledge not only about chemical and biological agents, but also about the behaviour of liquids, gases, and aerosols released in the atmosphere. Such information is of great value to environmentalists, meteorologists, public health authorities, and industrial chemists, as well as the Canadian Forces.

The work has also prepared Canadian troops and its allies for the ever-present potential of chemical and biological warfare. In the 1991 Gulf War, for instance, Suffield deployed chemical-biological defence equipment for the Canadian Forces. Such technology remains essential in the ongoing fight against terrorism. An antidote for a nerve agent, a skin decontaminant, a chemical-biological sampling kit, and detectors for chemical and biological agents are all direct applications of ongoing research projects at Suffield.

Without such advances emerging from Suffield's research labs – a by-product of British-Canadian wartime collaboration – the world would be a more dangerous place.

Doug Alexander is a Canadian journalist who exposed Canada's secret involvement in biological and chemical warfare while working in Britain from 1999 to 2003.

New and Notable Books



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– Major General Lewis MacKenzie (ret'd)

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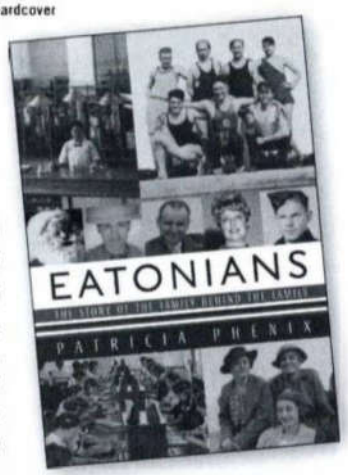

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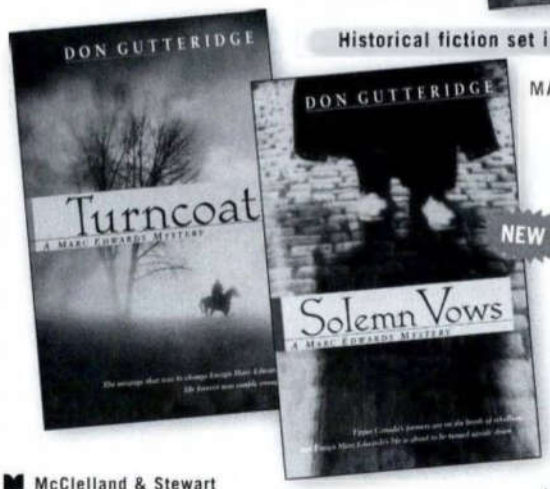

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Ginseng Rush

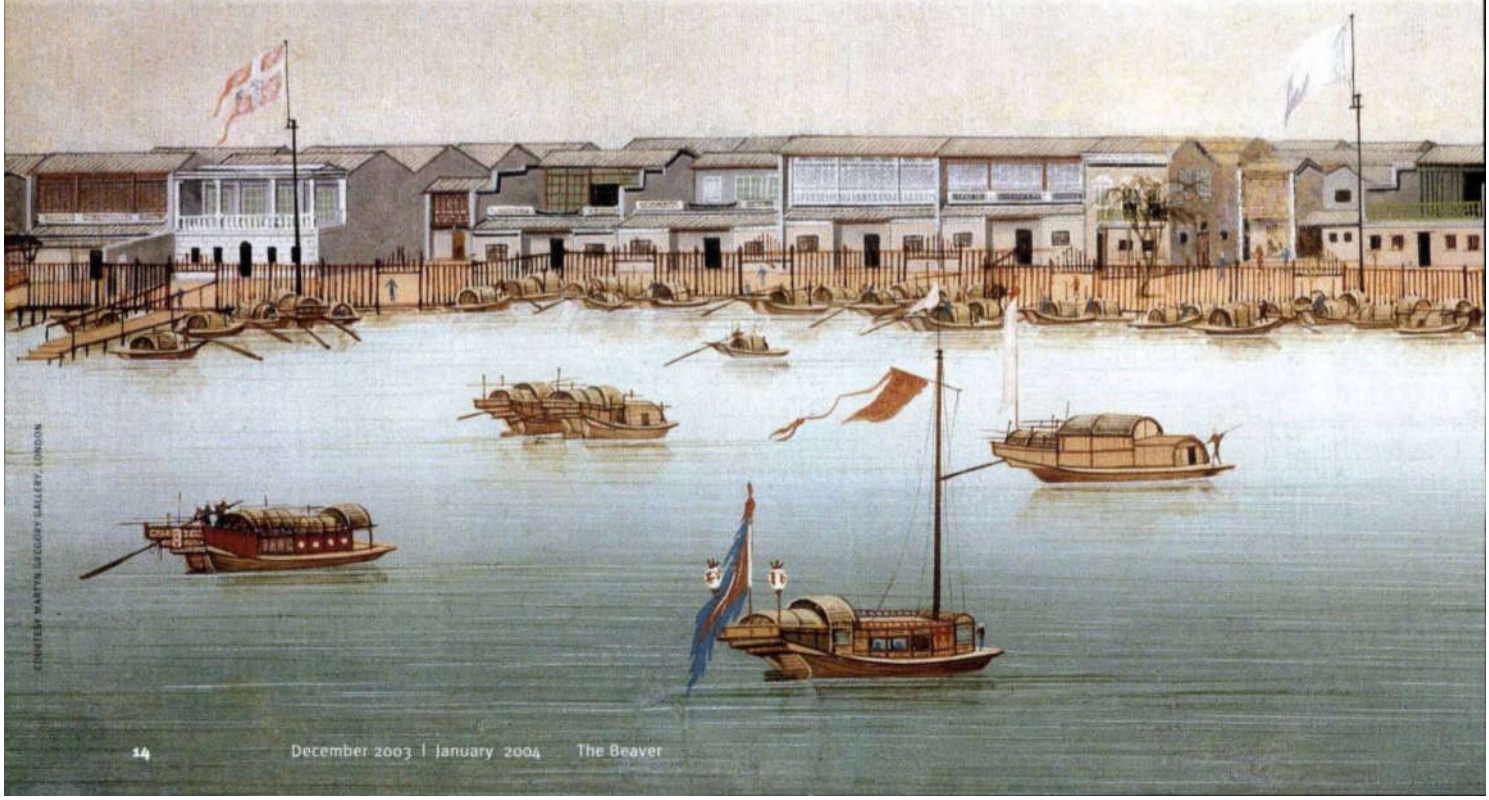
by André Pelchat **In the eighteenth century, Europeans were desperate to crack the Chinese market. But they had little the Chinese wanted in trade. Then a clever Jesuit noted that the ginseng plant thrived in New France. The Chinese couldn't get enough of the stuff.**

People travelling in the Okanagan Valley and around Kamloops, B.C. can sometimes see fields curiously hidden behind high black curtains. These are ginseng plantations. Harvested four years after being sown, ginseng root, in traditional Chinese medicine, is credited with the ability to clean the blood, lower cholesterol, increase life expectancy, and cure sexual impotence. Canada is a major producer of ginseng and 95 percent of its production is exported to Asia – most of it to Hong Kong and from there to mainland China. According to the Canadian consulate in Shanghai, North American ginseng, slightly different from its Asian counterpart, is appreciated mostly for its soothing virtues, while the Asian variety, or red ginseng, is more of a bracing tonic. Canada is the third largest producer of ginseng in the world, after China and Korea. Surprising as that may be for many readers, more surprising still is that the ginseng trade in Canada has roots (so to speak) going back to eighteenth-century New France.

It started in 1715 with Joseph-François Lafitau, a Jesuit missionary living in Quebec City, whose attention was captured by a letter written six years earlier in China by a Father Jartoux. In those days, in what was an early form of a global communications system, Jesuits circulated reports received at their headquarters in Rome to outlying missions. Jartoux wrote in his 1709 report a description of a plant the Chinese called ginseng, which they imported from Manchuria, and which they claimed increased health, longevity, and virility. Including a few drawings of the plant, Jartoux noted that the natural environment of Manchuria was very similar to that of Canada. He theorized that if the plant could be found anywhere outside of Asia, Canada would be the most likely place. But something else caught Lafitau's eye: for ginseng root, the Emperor of China paid "three times its weight in silver."

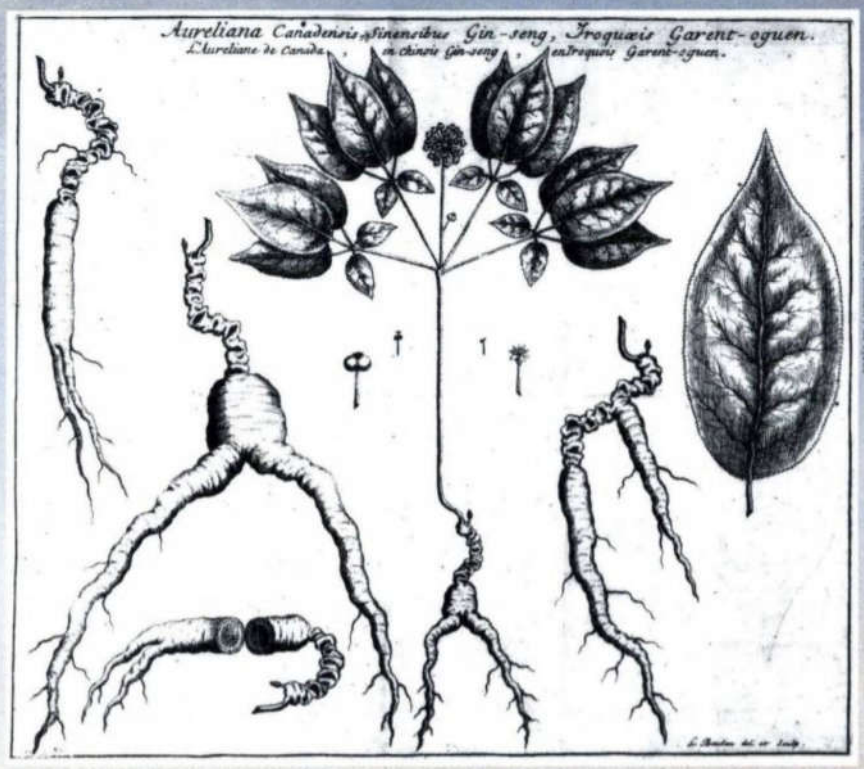
Lafitau was a man of great intellectual curiosity. Born in 1681, he had been a teacher in Paris before coming to Cana-

***The Western "Hongs" or "Factories," Canton*, by an unknown Chinese artist, circa 1780. Until 1842, foreigners trading with China were confined to a special area along the Pearl River at Canton and compelled to deal only with a small group of Chinese merchants directly responsible to the imperial government. (Note the French merchant flag of the day, the blue ensign with the white cross charged with the crowned shield of France, flying over the factory.) After the so-called opium wars in the early 1840s, the Treaty of Nanking replaced the Chinese merchants' monopoly with five treaty ports where foreigners could live and work outside of Chinese legal jurisdiction. Canton was one of them.**



COURTESY MARTYN GREGORY GALLERY, LONDON

da where from 1712 to 1717 he served as a missionary in Sault Saint-Louis (Kahnawake), ten kilometres southwest of present-day Montreal. Considered a pioneer of comparative ethnology (in 1723 his book *Moeurs des Sauvages amériquains comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps* compared North American native customs and traditions with those of the Old World), he hypothesized that the ancestors of native Americans originally came from East Asia, which may explain in part his interest in the Far East. Lafitau decided to test Jartoux's theory and see if ginseng did actually grow in North America. The plant had already been identified by surgeon and naturalist Michel Sarrazin, the king's physician in Canada, but Lafitau was the first to understand that it was the same valuable plant the Chinese called ginseng. He wondered, however, where it could be found in reasonable quantities. For an answer, he returned to Sault Saint-Louis, to the knowledgeable native people living there.


Aureliana Canadenſis Sinenſibus Gin-seng, Iroquæis Garent-oguen.
L'Aureliane de Canada, en chinois Gin-seng, en Iroquois Garent-oguen.

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In 1718, after three years in New France, Lafitau wrote to the Duke of Orleans, the regent of France, that he had discovered ginseng in the Canadian forests. More of a short book than a letter, *Mémoire présenté à S.A. royale le duc d'Orléans concernant la précieuse plante du ginseng de Tartarie découverte en Canada* contained this illustration of ginseng, emphasizing the root's resemblance to the shape of the human body.

Scientific curiosity was not the only motive for the Jesuit's interest in ginseng. A mixture of religious zeal and *realpolitik*, too, played a role. Though Jesuit missionaries had been in China since the early 1600s, they were merely tolerated. Chinese authorities were wary of Christianity and its possible political and social implications. To make themselves acceptable to the Chinese, the Jesuits turned themselves into scientific experts, helping the Chinese to, among other things, reform their calendar and reinvigorate their

Joseph-François Lafitau was born in Bordeaux, France, in 1681, the son of a wine merchant and banker. A priest, Jesuit missionary, and legal philosopher, he stayed in New France on two occasions. From 1712 to 1717, he was a missionary at Sault Saint Louis (Kahnawake) and from 1727 to 1729, the superior of that mission. Today he is recognized as one of the founders of modern comparative anthropology and his work *Moeurs des sauvages amériquains comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps* is considered the first scientific treatise in the field.

mathematics. As politician Chateaubriand would later write: "The Jesuit who was leaving for China was armed with a telescope and a compass." Emperor Kangxi proclaimed an Edict of Tolerance in 1693, which allowed the Jesuits to preach in China, but he did not assure the Christian position. "As far as the Western doctrine is concerned," he wrote, "it is only because its adepts have a deep knowledge of mathematics that the State hires them. Ignore it." (By 1722, Kangxi would be dead and his successor even less favourably inclined to Christianity.)

Jesuits recognized that for their spiritual mission to succeed in China they would need the help of European governments and the merchant class, and to do so they would have to show the material benefits of involvement with the Chinese. Trade with the Middle Kingdom had been largely one-sided. Thanks in part to Jesuit contact with China, eighteenth-century Europe had developed a taste for chinoiserie – tea, chinaware, lacquerware, and silk – and various European "East India Companies" had grown up to meet the demand. The Chinese, however, showed little interest in European products. There were few things Europeans produced that the Chinese could not produce, too. China was immense, diverse, and populous. In the eighteenth century, thanks to a period of peace and general prosperity, the population doubled to 300 million from 150 million. As nineteenth-century Jesuit Father Huc would later write: "One of the reasons why China is not fond of trading with foreigners is that its interior trade is immense."

Europeans reasoned that the only way to crack the Chinese market was to supply them with goods for which internal demand exceeded supply. A trade in marten fur had developed, but it was not enough. Something the Chinese would buy in large quantities and pay a high price for was needed. For Lafitau, ginseng appeared to be the answer. If material, as well as spiritual, benefits flowed from the Jesuit missions, then the French king would have an incentive to support them.

In 1716, Lafitau arrived in Sault Saint-Louis and showed the native people the pictures of the Chinese plant. They knew it well. Though North American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*) is a little different than its Asian counterpart (*Panax ginseng*), both had reputations as medical wonders. Ginseng was part of North American native traditional medicine too, though natives credited it with different virtues than the Chinese (they used it mainly as a contraceptive though, in infusion, it could be used against headaches, nausea, fever, and other ailments). They also showed Lafitau where he could find the plant. Ginseng grows in maple and pine forests, where other small plants are few, and where there is plenty of shade and humidity, and soil that is not too acid. Its natural habitat reaches from Maine to Minnesota and south to the hills of Georgia and Alabama.

In 1718, Lafitau published his discovery and presented it to the Duke of Orleans, the French regent (King Louis XV, who came to the throne in 1715, was only eight years old). The document aroused an intense interest in France and well as in Canada. Very soon a lucrative trade developed. Natives as well as Canadiens started to gather the plant and sell it to French merchants on the Montreal market. From there, it was sent to the French port of La Rochelle, where it was bought by the Compagnie des Indes, which owned the monopoly between France and Asia. The company then put the plant on ships bound for Canton, where Westerners, not allowed to trade directly with Chinese consumers, had "factories." There, Chinese merchants bought the ginseng and then sold it to doctors and pharmacists in the Chinese Empire. It was a cumbersome system. It took more than thirty-six weeks for the ginseng to get from Canada to China via France, and there were numerous intermediaries, but the profits were there: one pound of ginseng root bought in Montreal would sell for sixty times its price in Canton.

Lafitau continued to collect stories of ginseng's benefits, that it could heal just about anything from fever to asthma, from stomach troubles to kidney problems, but he couldn't completely discard his scientific distance. He wrote:

> *Nobody, as far as I know, has analyzed ginseng, yet. The apothecary brother of the Quebec Jesuits, a very good pharmacist, plans to subject it to chemical examination next year to discover its properties. I put some of it to fire; it doesn't burn, which make me think it contains little resin; it doesn't sparkle either, which shows it has few salts. The gentlemen of the Royal Academy of Sciences, with their capabilities, will give us a better idea of the plant's virtues.*

Lafitau, though, was not entirely optimistic. He wrote that the plant grew slowly and that he feared it would soon disappear from the areas settled by the French. "It will be necessary to go far in the woods to get it, which will make it rare and expensive."

Scientific prudence did not, however, impede trade, and for the next thirty years, ginseng became a major export item

CARTE
DE
L'AMERIQUE
Groenland Vieux et nouveau
Islen land
Mer
Mer
du
du
Nord
Sud
Terres Australes
peu connues
A. Amerique Septentrionale.
B. Amerique Meridionale.
C. Isthme de Panama qui divise l'una et l'autre.
D. Terres inconnuës qu'on suppose joindre l'Asie et l'Amerique.
E. Golfe du Mexique.
F. Mer Vermeille.
G. Baye et detroit d'Hudson.
H. Isle du Feu, entre les detroits de Magellan et de le Maire.
I. Golfe et Fleuve de S.t Laurent.
K. Fleuve Mississippi.
L. Riviere des Amazones.
M. Riviere de la Plata.
N. Montagnes des Andes.
O. Côtes de la nouv.le Espagne, vieux et nouveau Mexique, Perou, Chili.
P. Terre Magellanique.
Q. Brasil.
R. Isles Caraibes.
S. Côtes de la Floride, Virginie et nouvelle Angleterre.
T. Côtes de la nouvelle France.
Les Esquimaux, Kilistinons, Tetes de Boule, Assiniboualz, et Sioux, occupent tout le Nord du Canada. Les Nations Iroquoises, Huronne, Algonquines, et Outaouaises, les environs du Fleuve S.t Laurent. Les Illinois, Natchez &c. sont sur le Mississippi. Les Virginiens, Floridiens, Loups, Mahingans &c. sont au voisinage des Anglois. Les Abenaquis sont entre l'Acadie, et la Nouv.le Angleterre. Les Caraibes étoient autrefois maitres de toutes les Antilles. Les Tapuyes, Galibis, Brasiliens, et Peuples du Paraguay, occupent toutes les Côtes de l'Amerique Meridio.le du côté de la Mer du Nord. Le Centre de l'Amerique Meridle est plein de Nations diverses. On compte 70. Langues differentes sur le F. des Amazones.

A map of the New World from Lafitau's *Moeurs des sauvages amériquains comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps*, a landmark study of the laws and customs of the Iroquois, published in four volumes in Paris in 1724. As the title indicates, Lafitau was interested in comparing the mores of North American aboriginals with those of the Old World. Among his hypotheses was the notion that native North Americans originally came from east Asia.

for New France. From 1747 to 1752, the value of the ginseng sold in La Rochelle reached 19 percent of that of furs, until then virtually the only Canadian export. Ginseng was not only the magical trade good the Europeans had been looking for to improve their commerce with China, it marked the beginning of a relative diversification of the Canadian economy.

In 1751, with China enjoying an unprecedented period of economic expansion, demand for ginseng went sky high. Prices paid in Montreal for a pound of ginseng multiplied tenfold, and the trade suddenly looked like an easy way to make it rich. The following year, 1752, was the year of the "ginseng rush." Many *habitants*, previously uninterested, went to the woods and started to gather the plant. Some even gave up their farms.

The gloomy predictions of Lafitau (who had died in Bordeaux in 1746) concerning the possible disappearance of the plant soon materialized. Ginseng takes years to mature and an area where all the plants have been gathered will not quickly see wild ginseng again, if at all. People went further and further from settlements to find the precious plant; others started to gather it in areas previously untouched by the trade because the higher prices made the trip to Montreal profitable.

The resource was not only overexploited, it was mismanaged. To preserve its medical properties, ginseng root must be harvested in September. But many gatherers, unwilling to wait a whole summer to make a fortune, picked the root in May and dried it in an oven or above a fire, to make it look like a mature root. Experienced Chinese merchants, doctors, and pharmacists were not fooled. They quickly saw the difference, and Canadian ginseng soon acquired a reputation for bad quality. The Chinese stopped buying. Canadian ginseng exports declined to a value of 33,000 francs in 1754 from a value of 500,000 francs two years earlier. Worse, wild ginseng virtually disappeared from Canada and neighbouring territories.

In 1756, the Seven Years' War broke out, crushing Canadian and French attempts to restart the business. Virtually all the regions where the plant could still be found were invaded by French and British armies, colonial militias, and native war parties. British domination of the sea effectively cut off the naval route to China. When New France fell in 1759, the ginseng trade died in Canada. The Americans engaged in limited trade with the Chinese with ginseng gathered from the slopes of the Appalachians. The British, meanwhile, having lost their American colonies in 1783, found a new commodity they could sell to the Chinese that grew nowhere near Canada: opium. As for the Jesuits, anticlerical European governments forced the pope to suppress the order in 1773. They had to leave their missions in China and elsewhere.

Today, the ginseng trade is back in Canada. B.C. and Ontario produce together more than 2,300 tons a year. Some five hundred producers sold 40 million dollars worth of ginseng in 2000. But it is cultivated ginseng. Wild ginseng prices can get as much as ten times the price. However, wild ginseng is on the list of endangered species, and harvesting it in the wild, while not illegal, is irresponsible. In the meantime, agricultural researchers at Alfred College at the University of Guelph, among others, are experimenting with reintroducing wild ginseng to its natural habitat, the maple forests of eastern Ontario and Quebec, with a view to its eventual cultivation. But since as many as eight years are needed before wild ginseng can be harvested, it may be a decade before researchers know if the experiment is successful. If so, it would be a happy conclusion to a long story of science, religion, and greed, involving China, France, and Canada's aboriginal people and settlers.

André Pelchat is a freelance writer living in L'Avenir, Quebec.

They were men well versed in the ways of the Arctic. But they took a wrong turn on the trail fron

The Lost Patrol

by Ann Chandler

When Inspector Francis J. Fitzgerald of the Royal North-West Mounted Police left the Northwest Territories outpost of Herschel Island in December of 1911 to make the mail run from Fort McPherson in the Northwest Territories to Dawson City in the Yukon, he was looking forward to a break from the extreme isolation of his remote detachment. No stranger to the harshness of the north, he was unconcerned about the 765-kilometre journey that lay ahead, and anxious to make time.

Twenty-three years previously, in November of 1888, bored with selling shoes in Halifax and seeking adventure, a fresh-faced young Fitzgerald travelled to Regina and enlisted in the North-West Mounted Police. But the initial years of policing in Saskatchewan did little to appeal to the new constable's sense of adventure. When the glitter of gold lured thousands to the Klondike in 1896, Fitzgerald was presented with an opportunity to challenge his venturous spirit.

The summer of 1897 saw swarms of gold-seekers, many ill-suited to the task, attempting to forge the 2,000 kilometres of uncharted wilderness that lay between Edmonton and the Yukon goldfields. With no surveyed route to guide them, many became lost or ran out of supplies before reaching their destination. The concerned government intervened, instructing Inspector J.D. Moodie of the NWMP to lead a survey expedition to map an official route from Edmonton to Fort Selkirk on the Yukon River. Fitzgerald was among the four enlisted men seconded to that patrol. Despite bone-chilling temperatures, crippling illness, lost horses, and a Métis guide who quit because he thought the whole expedition foolhardy and preposterous, the patrol hacked its way through 2,500 kilometres of mosquitoes, muskeg, and thick timber, walking the last sixty-five kilometres to arrive at its destination more than one year after it departed. Fitzgerald proved resourceful and resilient, both mentally and physically, exemplifying those qualities necessary for life in the north. So impressed was Inspector Moodie with the young constable's performance on the trail that he recommended Fitzgerald be promoted.

Following a one-year stint serving with the First Canadian Mounted Rifles in the Boer War, Fitzgerald returned to Halifax and his duties as a policeman, becoming engaged to a local girl named Mary Shepard. But Mary's hopes for an early matrimony were dashed when Fitzgerald again received the call of the north in 1903, and was ordered to establish a detachment on remote Herschel Island to respond to complaints that American whaling ships using the island as a stop-off point were demoralizing the native population with alcohol.

What greeted Fitzgerald and his two constables was enough to challenge even the toughest of men. Temperatures dipped below minus sixty Celsius and the barren island produced little of sustenance. As was common in many remote police detachments, Fitzgerald was not only a policeman, but a tax collector, mining inspector, customs agent, and health inspector. He became accustomed to travelling the gruelling northern trails in harsh conditions, and had been known to second-guess nature on several occasions. Years on Herschel Island were lonely, and before long Fitzgerald began a relationship with an Inuit woman named Lena Oonalina, a union that produced a daughter, Annie, in 1909. That same year, Fitzgerald was promoted to inspector.

Highly respected by his superiors, the forty-one-year old Fitzgerald was chosen to attend the 1911 coronation of King George V in England. He was to coincide his departure from Herschel Island with the annual mail patrol, leading the patrol from Fort McPherson to Dawson City in December of 1910. The first annual RNWMP mail patrol, which became

Fort McPherson to Dawson City. The northern winter was unforgiving.

known as the Dawson Patrol, had taken fifty-six days to travel from Dawson City to Fort McPherson, carrying mail and dispatches to the Arctic outposts in the winter of 1904–1905. Having joined the patrol once before, in 1905–1906, Fitzgerald was not unfamiliar with the route, but the Dawson side had since been altered.

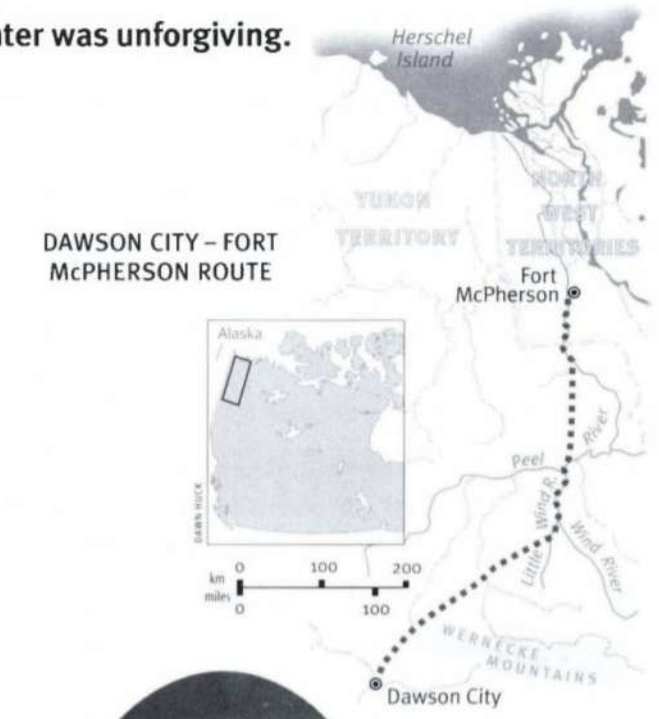
An air of competition often pervaded the dogsled expeditions of the north, especially among the Mounties. Each man had his own manner of organizing supplies for his patrol, but the general rule was to carry enough supplies for thirty days, relying on game hunting or trade with native people encountered along the way to provide the remainder. To the police patrols, speed was of the essence, and hunting for game took time. On this patrol, the seventh Dawson Patrol, but the first to begin at Fort McPherson, Fitzgerald acted on his opinion that the patrol had always carried too much weight. Believing that they could make the trip in thirty-five days, he and his men made the decision to cut supplies and use lighter-weight snowshoes and sleds.

Rather than utilize the services of the seasoned and knowledgeable native guides who knew the trail well, Fitzgerald chose instead to hire a man many thought unqualified for the task, forty-one-year-old ex-NWMP Constable Sam Carter. Carter, who had retired from the force after twenty-one years of service and married an Inuit girl had, like Fitzgerald, only made the trip once previously in the opposite direction, but was confident he would have no problem guiding the patrol. Fitzgerald was well acquainted with Carter, for the constable had served under his command at Herschel Island.

On the solicited recommendation of Corporal J. Somers, who was in charge of the Fort McPherson detachment, Fitzgerald chose Constables George Francis Kinney, twenty-seven, a U.S. Army veteran who had served in the Spanish-American war, and Richard O'Hara Taylor, twenty-eight, a sea-faring Scotsman who was known to be handy with a compass, to complete the patrol.

Despite minus twenty-nine degree temperature, heavy mist, and a strong north wind, the men departed early on December 21, breaking through heavy snow with three three-metre birch-wood sleds, each laden with 270 kilograms of provisions and pulled by a team of five dogs. They camped the first night in an Indian cabin twenty-four kilometres up the Peel River. The patrol made fair time for the first week in spite of deep snow, averaging twenty-five to thirty kilometres per day along the Wind River.

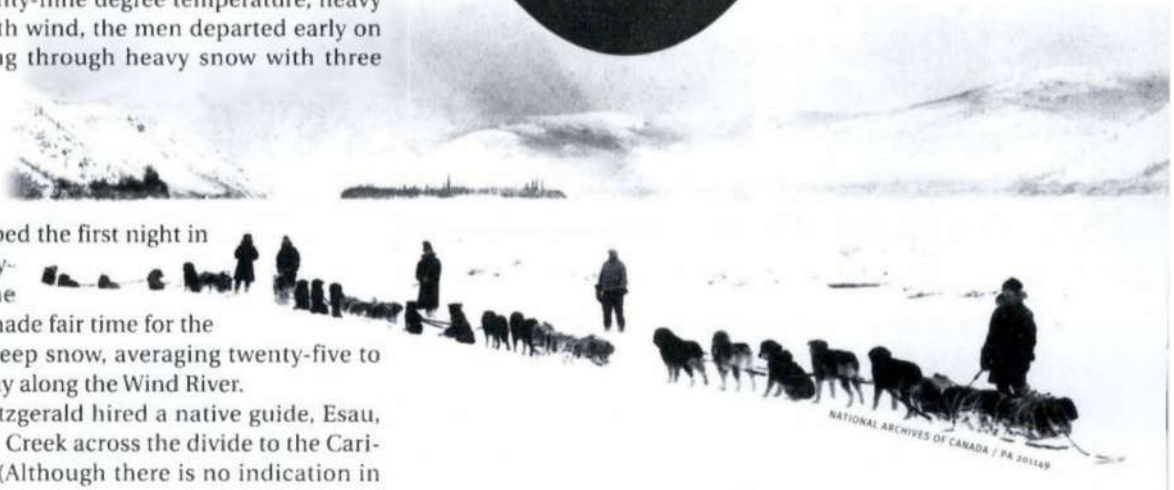
On the fifth day, Fitzgerald hired a native guide, Esau, to break trail from Trail Creek across the divide to the Caribou Born mountains. (Although there is no indication in



RCMP MUSEUM, REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

Francis Joseph Fitzgerald (right), 1869–1911.

Fitzgerald was stationed at Herschel Island in the Beaufort Sea, when he was chosen to lead the annual mail patrol (below) from Fort McPherson to Dawson City en route to travelling to London to attend the coronation of King George V.



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Fitzgerald's diary that the men were lost at this point, Esau would later report that the patrol had been on the wrong trail when they approached his camp.) The patrol struggled to make progress through the deep snow as the trail steepened, conditions worsened, and the temperature plummeted to minus forty-six.

On December 30 Fitzgerald wrote in his diary, "only made about nine miles. ... Found it very cold on account of going so slow."

On New Year's Day, 1911, Fitzgerald released the native guide, paying him for the three days to return home. The

Under the command of Corporal William Dempster, a Royal North-West Mounted Police expedition left Dawson City, Yukon, on February 28, 1911, to search for Inspector Francis J. Fitzgerald, who had left Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories, ten weeks earlier on what was expected to be a five-week trek between the two settlements.

extreme cold and heavy snow had begun to take its toll on both men and dogs, and they were already exhausted. As the temperature dropped even further, to minus fifty-four, their progress slowed by the intense cold and the agony of frostbite, the patrol only managed ten kilometres on January 5, and were forced to make camp by noon.

By January 12, the temperature had risen to minus thirty-seven, but the patrol was hopelessly lost. Guide Sam Carter became confused, and wasted precious days travelling up one creek after another, desperately searching for Forrest Creek, which led the trail across the Hart-Wind Divide to the other side of the Wernecke Mountain range. Several times, Fitzgerald struck out on his own, but was unable to recognize any landmarks. Disoriented and numbed by cold, they had already covered a total of 550 kilometres and food supplies had become perilously low. They encountered no parties of natives, and no sign of game. The patrol was forced to come to the realization that they had only one remaining source of food.

On January 17, Fitzgerald wrote in despair,

Carter is completely lost and does not know one river from another.

We have now only 10 pounds of flour and 8 pounds of bacon and some dried fish. My last hope is gone, and the only thing I can do is to return, and kill some of the dogs to feed the others and ourselves, unless we can meet some Indians.

We have now been a week looking for a river to take us over the divide, but there are dozens of rivers and I am at a loss. I should not have taken Carter's word that he knew the way from Little Wind river.

Thirteen below. Wednesday, January 18. Left camp on the return to Peel river. ... Killed the first dog to-night for dog feed; hardly any of the dogs would eat him, and had to give them a little dried fish. Our food consisted of a small piece of bannock and dried fish.

Weakened by hunger and cold, their only sustenance dog meat and tea, the men spent the night of January 29 in a cabin, where they killed yet another dog for food. The next morning, leaving behind one sled and seven dog harnesses, the patrol determinedly pushed on. But weather conditions worsened, and the men became ill.

Fitzgerald wrote: "Fifty-one below. ... Going very heavy; old trail all filled in. All hands feeling sick, supposed to be from eating dog's liver. Fourteen miles."

Fitzgerald's entry the following day chillingly portrayed the men's pitiful condition: "Skin peeling off our faces and parts of the body, and lips all swollen and split. I suppose this is caused by feeding on dog meat. Everybody feeling the cold very much for want of proper food."

Overcome by starvation, sickness, and cold, Fitzgerald's tenacious optimism and strength are evident in his diary entry for February 3:

Killed another dog to-night, and had to feed some of it to the dogs as we have no dried fish. Men and dogs very thin and weak, and cannot travel far. We have travelled about 200 miles on dog meat, and have still about 100 miles to go, but I think we will make it all right, but will have only three or four dogs left.

The patrol plodded relentlessly on, but the decision to

Battling bitter temperatures, heavy gale-force winds, and icy conditions, the searchers eventually located the faint track.

turn back had come too late. Two days later, on February 5, Fitzgerald wrote the final entry in his diary:

> *Forty-eight below. Saturday, February 5.– Fine with strong S.E. wind. Left camp at 7.15 A.M.; nooned one hour, and camped about eight miles further down. Just after noon I broke through the ice and had to make fire; found one foot slightly frozen. Killed another dog to-night; have only five dogs now, and can only go a few miles a day; everybody breaking out on the body and skin peeling off. Eight miles.*

On February 20, a party of natives arrived in Dawson from the Peel River district. Among them was Esau, the guide who had travelled with Fitzgerald's patrol for several days. He reported having left the patrol on New Year's Day, within twenty days travel of Dawson. Hungry for news of the long overdue patrol, headquarters at Dawson immediately prepared to send a search party.

On February 28, Constable Fyfe, ex-Constable Turner, and native guide Charles Stewart, under the command of Corporal William Dempster, left Dawson to search for the missing men.

Dempster's party initially had difficulty picking up Fitzgerald's trail. Battling bitter temperatures, heavy gale-force winds, and icy conditions, the searchers eventually located the faint track, and, following it, determined that the close proximity of its night camps meant the patrol must have doubled back.

On March 16, Dempster and his party discovered the patrol's dispatch and mail bags, stashed in a cabin only eighty kilometres from Fort McPherson. Despite their weakened condition, the men had remained devoted to duty, carrying the heavy burden almost to the end.

Five days later, on March 21, Dempster's party found a tent and stove alongside the trail. Sixteen kilometres further, they located a sled and two sets of dog harness. A blue handkerchief fluttered from a willow on the bank. Climbing the bank, Dempster entered a stand of timber that opened into a small clearing.

In the clearing beneath two down sleeping bags, lay the thin, twisted body of Richard Taylor, a 30-30 rifle still clutched in his left hand. He had taken his own life. Next to him lay the body of his comrade, George Kinney, both hands folded neatly across his chest. The feet of both men were frozen and swollen beyond any hope of use, their only provisions a frying pan, a small tin with a few matches, a blunt axe with a broken handle, and a camp kettle containing a crude stew made of boiled moose hide.

Concealed beneath the robe on which they lay, a gunny sack contained a few personal belongings, and Fitzgerald's diary, which would reveal the harrowing tale of their ill-fated patrol.

After covering the bodies with brush, Dempster and his men proceeded to Fort McPherson, concluding that Fitzgerald and Carter had left their two comrades in a desperate attempt to reach the fort and would be found along the trail.

The following morning, sixteen kilometres further down river, the men encountered an indistinct trail leading up a bank into the woods. Following the trail, Dempster stumbled upon a pair of snowshoes, and further on, in a stand of timber, located the emaciated bodies of Fitzgerald and Carter. Carter had evidently died first, for his body had been laid out in the proper manner, his bandaged hands folded across his chest and his face covered. Fitzgerald's body, wrapped with only two thin blankets, lay where the fire had once been. There was no sign of the dogs.

DAVE WALKER

Corporal Dempster and his rescue party returned to Fort McPherson with the bodies of the four men. The loss of four strong, healthy men was a shock to the small northern policing community.

Fitzgerald and Carter had succumbed a mere forty kilometres from Fort McPherson.

The bodies of the four men, whose outer clothing had been badly scorched by fire in a desperate attempt to warm themselves, were returned to Fort McPherson for burial. In Fitzgerald's trouser pocket, a crude will scrawled with a charred stick read:

> *All money in Dispatch Bag and Bank, clothes etc I leave to my dearly beloved Mother Mrs John Fitzgerald, Halifax God Bless all. F.J. Fitzgerald* RNWMP

The loss of four strong, healthy men was a shock to the small northern policing community. In formal statements submitted to the subsequent inquiry, many speculated

about how this tragedy could have been avoided. All agreed that the decision to cut supplies had been a major factor in the men's demise. It was unusual that members of the patrol had not encountered natives along the way from whom they could have purchased meat or fish, or that they had not chanced upon any game, enabling them to replenish their supplies. A hastily drawn map, which Fitzgerald had requested from ex-RNWMP member and guide, Hubert Darrell, had obviously not been much help. Ironically, Darrell mysteriously disappeared at the same time.

Media and public outcry questioned police procedure, remonstrating the necessity of such clearly dangerous patrols. Inspector Fitzgerald, though lauded for his commendable effort in pressing on, was criticized for carrying inadequate supplies and failing to utilize the available services of the more experienced Indian guides. A more inexperienced man might have turned back sooner, but Fitzgerald, with many difficult but successful expeditions under his belt, may have been reluctant to admit failure too early, assuming that his luck would turn, as it often had in the past.

As a result of the tragedy, RNWMP Commissioner Bowen Perry ordered shelter cabins and emergency food caches to be installed at various points along the trail, instructing that all future patrols be accompanied by an experienced guide.

Criticism long since forgotten, the men of the lost patrol are remembered for their tenacity and courage in forging on against such formidable odds.

Ann Chandler is a writer and anthropologist living in New Westminster, B.C.

ET CETERA

The Lost Patrol **by Dick North. Raincoast Books, Vancouver, 1995.**

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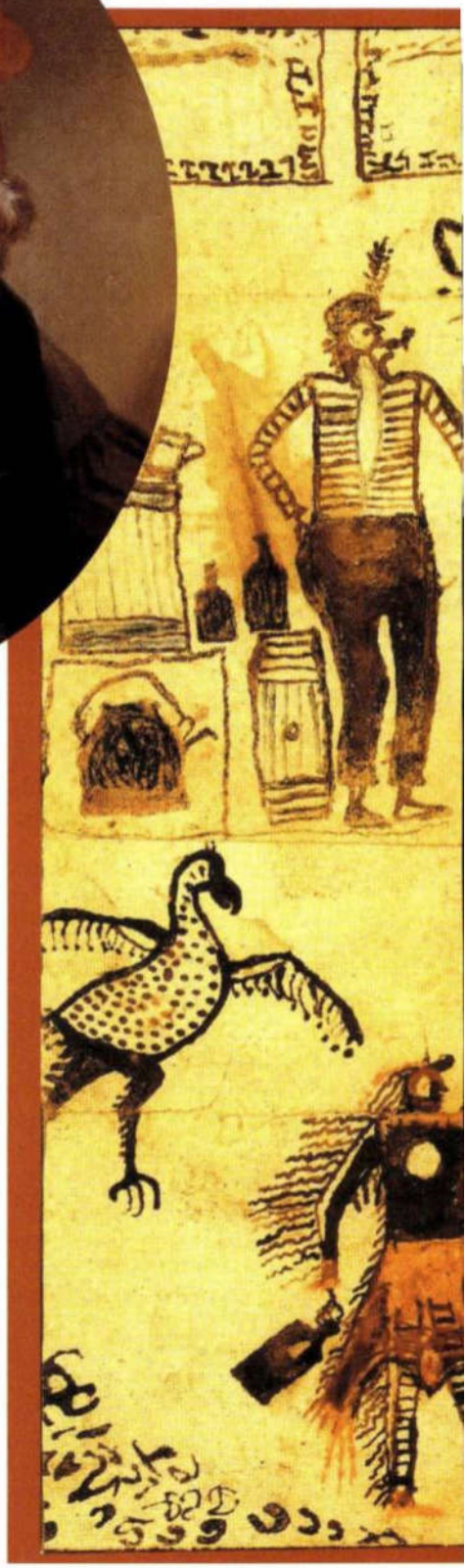
A Habitant Drinking, **by Cornelius Krieghoff (1815–1872).**



Around 1847–48, a Jesuit missionary, Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, collected this drawing by an unknown aboriginal artist in the Pacific Northwest, depicting the native drinking experience. The upper half shows the acquisition of the liquor, while the lower half suggests the dreamlike contact with the spirit world that natives believed alcohol provided.

by Craig Heron **In preindustrial Canada, alcohol was everywhere. At work and at play.**

The Water of Life

By the end of the eighteenth century, almost everyone in the European settlements must have been tasting alcohol at some time during the year. It was a food, medicine, tonic, and stimulant, and, especially for men, it stood at the core of all ceremonies and rituals, both public and private. Men used frequent drinking to affirm bonds of all kinds among themselves. There were two distinct, though sometimes overlapping, patterns in this period down to the 1840s: daily consumption at home and work, and celebratory imbibing.

In the early years of French settlement, the *habitants* of New France, like the French peasantry, could not afford alcohol every day. Indeed, when the Swedish botanist Peter Kalm visited the colony in 1749 he noted that most settlers could not afford wine. "The common man's drink was water," he wrote. But the consumption of alcoholic beverages seems to have spread during the eighteenth century, and by the early nineteenth century, whether as food or tonic, alcohol was mostly cheap and widely available and in the cupboards of most households. In many communities, alcoholic drinks were on the table for daily meals, though they were often weak brews or watered down before drinking; and contrary to much later moralizing, they were probably consumed in the household only in relatively small quantities at mealtime and rarely led to drunkenness. People used them partly no doubt to compensate for relentlessly bland diets, sometimes as alternatives to uncertain supplies of safe drinking water, and generally as substitutes for more costly drinks.

For centuries Europeans had spurned water as a healthy or convivial drink, and medical authorities seldom recommended it. In cities drinking water had frequently been polluted, scarce, and expensive. Not surprisingly, British shipping legislation required the master of a vessel to lay in at least two-thirds of a gallon of beer (about three litres) for each passenger for the transatlantic voyage. Some early settlers in what is now Canada continued to harbour real doubts about water as a beverage, and many believed that it could not be drunk without the addition of spirits. William Berczy, a German aristocrat who brought a group of settlers from New York State into Upper Canada in the 1790s, insisted that his men needed "some spiritous liquors ... in a country where it is destructive to the health for those who must chiefly work in the open air to drink constantly raw water alone."

Other nonalcoholic drinks were certainly harder to get or too expensive. Until settlers had more cows, milk was scarce and prone to souring when available. Tea and coffee were costly luxuries in the colonies before the nineteenth century. In any case, popular wisdom insisted that alcoholic

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Excerpted from *Booze in Canada: A History* published by Between the Lines, Toronto. Author Craig Heron surveys Canadian drink and drinking from the European conquest to the present.

Employers in construction, logging, fishing, and the fur trade all found, in the words of a Hudson's Bay Company official, that workers had to be "bribed by Spirituous Liquors to do their duty."

drinks were nutritious food and good for the health. Loyalists passing though Quebec in 1795 observed that "a glass of rum and a crust of bread is the usual breakfast of the French Canadian; the rigour of their climate is alleged as the cause of their having frequent recourse to [rum] at other times of the day."

According to one Nova Scotian, spirits "were almost universally regarded as little less necessary to man's healthful existence than flesh and bread. Alcohol, it was thought, kept out heat in summer and cold in winter, supplied strength to labour, helped digestion, warded off disease, and did many other marvellous things." Many people believed, contrary to scientific reality, that alcohol gave warmth in the cold northern climate of these colonies. It was also supposed to have great medicinal value. "In many families, whiskey was served to each member of the household in the morning," one writer recalled. "It was considered to be a precaution against colds and to enable one to do hardy work." Taken straight or mixed with various herbs, alcohol was a regular household remedy for many health problems, often in the form of patent medicines. A popular remedy for cholera, for example, was Huxham's Tincture, which contained two ounces of Peruvian bark, a half ounce of Virginia snake root, and three and a half pints of whisky. In keeping with this custom, whisky consumption allegedly rose during the cholera epidemic of the early 1830s. Doctors were more likely to prescribe brandy and wine as stimulants and tonics.

Colonists in New France and British North America also drank booze regularly outside the household, especially on work sites. Unlike the regimented work world of industrial capitalism, the rhythms of preindustrial labour followed the seasons and the tasks to be done, not the rigid structures of year-round clock time. The hours of work at some points of the year could be long and demanding. As shocking as it might seem to twenty-first-century sensibilities, drinking on the job could help colonists get through the dawn-to-dusk working day – and also, along with singing, storytelling, gossiping, and debating, might help to make the experience more sociable.

In the backwoods, settlers often pitched in to help their neighbours clear some bush or raise a barn. Whole communities came together for working parties known in Upper Canada as "bees," where, besides completing a major project, neighbours could gossip, discuss religion or politics, look for potential spouses, and generally have a good time. Frequently, the men who arrived to help with the heavy tasks refused to work without getting whisky. On average a host could expect to provide a gallon of whisky (about four litres) for every family that showed up. Every bee had a "grog boss" who kept the booze flowing to the workers. Drinking would continue through meals and into the merrymaking after the work was completed. Susanna Moodie observed in the 1840s that "people in the woods have a craze for giving and going to bees ... plenty of strong drink making the chief attraction." According to one London clergyman, "Many of the people came for the sole purpose of drinking and never once assisted in raising a log. Many got drunk." A traveller reported, "After the whiskey had been handed about several times they got very uproarious – swearing, shouting, tumbling down, and sometimes like to fight. ... Many accidents happen, and lives are frequently lost on these occasions, both from accidents and quarrels." Another account told the story of a temperance supporter who refused to provide liquor at a bee. A group of eight outraged neighbours pulled down the logs on his barn as fast as they were put in place.

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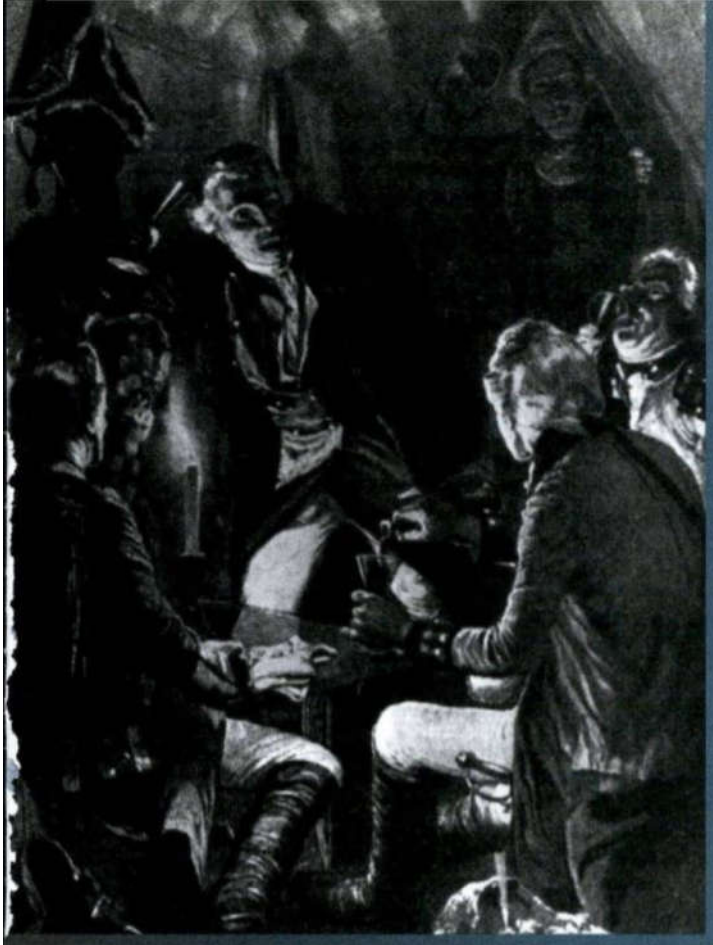
In these early years, men who worked for wages also expected alcohol in their daily work routines, as had their forebears in Europe for centuries. Sailors in the French navy got watered wine with every meal, while their British counterparts had long been eligible for a gallon of beer a day during voyages. In both cases the drink was meant to compensate for the typically putrid drinking water (distilling equipment for treating water onboard did not arrive until the mid-nineteenth century). The British seamen had also been getting a "tot" of rum every day since the British had seized Jamaica in 1655. By the time the British conquered New France more than a century later, each man was being provided with half a pint (about a quarter-litre), though commanders were instructed to add three or four parts water to one part spirits to make "grog." Work onboard ships stopped at eleven in the morning and four in the afternoon for the rum issue. (The tradition of issuing rum extended to the merchant marine and carried over into the Canadian navy after 1910, ending only in 1972.)

British soldiers could look forward to a similar bright spot in their otherwise dreary days. For about seventy years after the conquest of Quebec, they got a gill (four ounces, or 142 millilitres) of rum every day. They also had access to a half-gallon or more of spruce or malted beer. Officers enjoyed wine and more expensive liquors. Enlisted men might get extra rum rations as encouragement for extra



According to the artist R.C. Woodville, General James Wolfe rallied his officers by drinking and carousing in his tent the night before the fall of Quebec in 1759. He is shown here leading them in a drinking song, probably his own composition, "How Stands the Glass Around," which circulated as sheet music for many years after his death on the Plains of Abraham.

People of all classes consumed alcohol when they socialized. Only the patterns differed. Men, especially young men, who worked together as fur traders, sailors, loggers, or canal labourers, would break loose at the end of heavy bouts of work with drinking sprees. In gentry households, such as that below, men might spend long evenings together consuming vast quantities of wine or port.

A pioneer inn painted in 1837 by writer and artist Anna Jameson. In *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, her memoir of her eight-month stay in the colony, she noted, "I found no means whatever of social amusement for any class, except that which the tavern afforded: taverns consequently abounded everywhere."

effort, often as part of the pay they earned for outside work as civilian labourers. General James Wolfe claimed in 1758 that grog was "the cheapest pay for work that can be given." Perhaps, as at the battle of Quebec a year later, it was also the best way of bracing soldiers for combat.

Many men in civilian jobs expected similar daily treats as part of their wages. In 1636 the Jesuits reported that a farm labourer got "a chopine of cider a day, or a pot of beer, and sometimes a drink of wine." Five years later, the manager of the Forges du Saint-Maurice insisted that he had to provide plenty of brandy and wine for his ironworkers. Immediately after the Conquest his English successor laid in ninety-eight gallons of rum for the workers. The English workmen who began to arrive at the ironworks insisted on whisky as part of their labour contracts. Employers in construction, logging, fishing, and the fur trade all found, in the words of a Hudson's Bay Company official, that workers had to be "bribed by Spirituous Liquors to do their duty." Among Montreal craftworkers, one writer noted, "A system of continual drinking was kept up, by treating on the part of the masters, and fines, footings [fines] and subscriptions, on the part of the men." Labourers digging canals broke up their long, strenuous working days with three or four gills of whisky, which, it has been argued, kept them pacified but nonetheless ready to put on a new burst of excavation with the promise of an extra booze ration. Stories of teachers drinking on the job also survived, along with those of high colonial officials who could not perform their duties after a certain hour of the day.

In many cases the parallel to the modern coffee breaks took place in the late morning and midafternoon, when workers downed their booze. A British military officer travelling in North America in the 1820s was struck not only by the number of times a day that men took a drink, but also by the small quantities consumed at any one time. "What I did see," he wrote, "at every corner into which I travelled, north or south, east or west, was the universal practice of sipping a little at a time, but frequently." 🖼

Craig Heron teaches Canadian History and Labour Studies at York University. He is the author of numerous articles and books on Canadian working-class history, including *Working in Steel: The Early Years in Canada, 1883–1935*, *The Canadian Labour Movement*, and *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917–1925*.

Simon Newcomb's

by Jean-Louis Trudel **A yearning for knowledge would lead a Nova Scotia son far from home to become the most honoured astronomer of his day – and, some think, the inspiration for Conan Doyle's villainous Moriarty.**

Tuesday, September 13, 1853. A young man trudged wearily on the road from Moncton to Saint John. Every so often, he would scan the horizon, hoping to see the mail stage he was counting on to get him to Saint John. Where was it? At last, instead of the stagecoach, he spotted a seemingly familiar shape on the road behind him. It looked like his master's buggy and so he hastened to hide himself in the shrubbery by the road.

When the carriage clattered by, the runaway apprentice breathed a sigh of relief. He could not be sure, but it had looked like Doctor Foshay's horse and buggy. And so the eighteen-year-old walked on, wondering yet again if he was doing the right thing. Uncertainty ruled his thoughts, now that he was fleeing the provinces that had been all the world he knew.

Years later, he would attempt to recall those roiling thoughts as he pushed on, one long mile after the next.

> No definite idea of what success might mean could find a place in my mind. I had sometimes indulged in day-dreams, but these come not to a mind occupied as mine on that day. And if they had, and if fancy had been allowed its wildest flight in portraying a future, it is safe to say that the figure of an honorary academician of France, seated in the chair of Newton and Franklin in the palace of the Institute, would not have been found in the picture.

Indeed, on that lonely New Brunswick road, young Simon Newcomb could never have imagined that he would become the most honoured astronomer of his day. By the time of his death in 1909, he would garner numerous awards, including the Royal Society's Copley medal, the nineteenth-century equivalent of a Nobel Prize. In Paris, the Académie des Sciences would appoint him a foreign associate, one of only eight. In 1899, he would be the founding president of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America, now known as the American Astronomical Society. In 1907, France would make him a Commander of the Légion d'Honneur. Elevated by the United States to the rank of rear admiral, he would be buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery, attended by President Taft and other dignitaries.

Canadian histories are quick to tell us of those who fled to Canada, whether Loyalists, escaped slaves, Vietnam draft dodgers, or modern refugees. Yet, many have also left in the opposite direction, seeking refuge or a better life in the United States. Some were on the losing side of a clash, such as the rebels of 1837 and 1838, or the Métis in 1870 and 1885. Most simply pursued economic opportunity south of the border.

However, some nineteenth-century Canadians had another reason for leaving: they wanted an education. Institutions of higher learning were rare in the British provinces of North America and few measured up to the standard set by the universities of Europe or the United States. If a young man wished to achieve eminence in a field such as medicine or science, his course was clear and it led abroad.

When they weren't immigrants themselves, the top scientists and inventors of Canada's Victorian era were often educated overseas. Alexander Graham Bell and Sandford Fleming hailed from Scotland. William Logan and George Dawson studied in Great Britain. Even William Osler, the great physician who put Montreal on the map, received postgraduate training in Europe after matriculating from McGill University in medicine.

Of course, not all departures were as dramatic as Simon Newcomb's in 1853. But then, few had probably felt the need for education so acutely. The world of learning was for him the world of sweetness and light. In his autobiography, he opposed it to the world of cold and darkness of his childhood in the Maritime provinces.

The astronomer-to-be was born near Wallace, Nova Scotia, in 1835, a year remembered for the return of Halley's comet. His father was a schoolteacher for hire, moving from one village to the next in rural Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Books were rare, and even Simon's father was alarmed by the intensity his six-year-old applied to learning to read and count. When Simon suffered a mental breakdown of sorts, supposedly from learning too much, his father curtailed further schooling.

This did not stop the young boy from reading and studying intently the few books he could get his hands on. Nevertheless, he reached the age of sixteen without any formal instruction beyond his father's drills. His love of books, however, made him feel estranged from his rural neighbours. When his chance came, he grasped it. While on a visit to his maternal grandfather's establishment near

Journey

Moncton, the old magistrate urged him to choose a trade. Desperate to avoid the life of a farmer, Simon thought of becoming a carpenter until he met Doctor Foshay. The physician practised "the botanic system of medicine" and was known as a man of learning. Simon's first impression was good: here, at last, was a "denizen of that world of light which I had so long wished to see." All involved were happy to agree to a five-year apprenticeship, committing Simon to serve Doctor Foshay as an assistant until he was twenty-one.

The sixteen-year-old soon realized he had been duped. Doctor Foshay was neither a man of intellect nor even an honest herbalist, and he expected his assistant to be an all-purpose servant. Simon persisted in the hope of learning something, anything, from his new master, but he never got further than grinding and mixing nostrums. As the months wore on, he often muttered to himself a bitter couplet summarizing his tasks within the household:

> Physician, apothecary, chemist, and druggist,
> Girl about house and boy in the barn.

He had three years left to go in his contract, to be grimly endured until he was free. And then Simon had a revelation. A local lad had run off to the goldfields of Australia. Instead of being reviled for absconding, the runaway excited something close to approval among his friends and relatives, and even more so when he sent news from faraway London.

Simon was roused to take action. With Doctor Foshay gone on an errand, the young man listed his grievances in a note and then started for Saint John. He hoped to make his way from there to the United States where his father had moved after his wife's death.

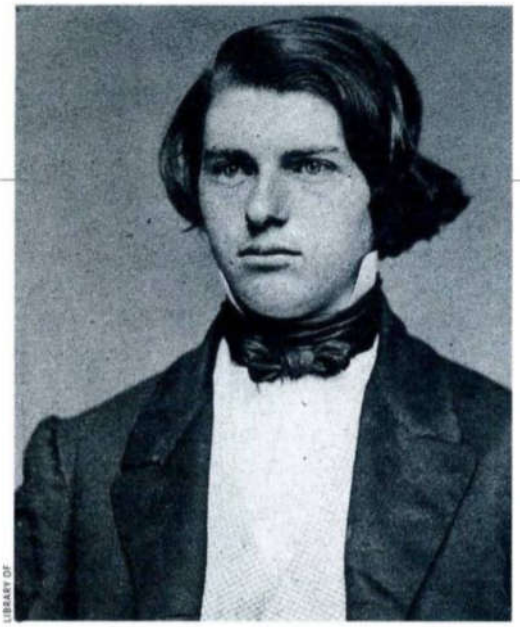
On that day, Simon Newcomb walked for over twenty hours along the road south, covering nearly eighty kilometres. Though he eluded his master's pursuit, he failed in getting the mail stage to stop, tramped on, and finally found a house to take him in for the night, thus ending what he later called the "most memorable" day of his life.

When he finally reached Calais, Maine, Newcomb had a dollar or two left in his pocket, just enough to convince a ship owner to take him aboard if he worked his passage. Nothing would come easily to the young Maritimer: the trip to Salem was delayed by contrary weather and it was three weeks before the ship reached its Massachusetts port.

When he was finally reunited with his father, a new life began: Simon became a schoolmaster.

Teaching the children of Maryland farmers was not much of a challenge, perhaps, but meeting it reassured the self-taught young man. Soon, he took advantage of Washington's proximity to visit the newly opened Smithsonian Institution. The riches of its library attracted him like a magnet, and Simon discovered a trove of knowledge

A pen and ink sketch of Simon Newcomb in his later years by Robert Kastor. Newcomb's work in reorganizing the theory and means of computing lunar and planetary tables had an international impact. Previously, the base values used by scientists to calculate lunar and planetary positions were subject to much variation.



LIBRARY OF

Newcomb in 1857 at age twenty-two. That year he enrolled in the Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard University and began work as a computer in the Nautical Almanac Office in Cambridge. He received his degree a year later.

to slake even his enormous thirst for learning.

In his later memoirs, Newcomb struggled to explain why his father had chosen to move to Maryland, but it was a fateful choice. Nowhere else perhaps would Simon have found similar opportunities, especially to indulge a long-time interest in astronomy. He tackled the masterpieces of celestial mechanics and so impressed the secretary of the Smithsonian that he was finally sent to Boston where he could embark on a career as an astronomer.

In December of 1856, he arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to take up a position in the Nautical Almanac Office (which provided sailors with a yearly manual for celestial navigation)as a "computer," a job that entailed the sort of calculations now performed in microseconds by electronic computers. At the same time he would earn a degree at Harvard, but Newcomb later chose his initial meeting with the astronomers of the Nautical Almanac as the moment of truth. Though the words are stilted, the feeling is unmistakable: "I date the fruition of my hopes, my actual citizenship of the world of my childish dreams and youthful aspirations, from one frosty morning in January, 1857, when I took my seat before a blazing fire in the 'Nautical Almanac' office." He never looked back.

In later years, Newcomb surely drew on the resources he had discovered in himself on the road to Saint John. In 1860, the freshly minted astronomer took part in an eclipse expedition all the way to the north end of Lake Winnipeg. In 1864, he was called to man Washington's fortifications when the city was threatened by a Confederate raid during the Civil War, and he bivouacked there for a couple of nights, expecting to face an attack at any moment.

In 1871, he entered Paris just as peace had been signed between France and Prussia. Newcomb intended to spend a few weeks digging into the old records of the Paris Observatory, but he had not planned for the

U.S. NAVAL OBSERVATORY

Astronomers at the United States Naval Observatory preparing for the 1874 transit of Venus. Newcomb is fifth from the left.

Professor Moriarty, Sherlock Holmes's nemesis, illustration by Sidney Paget, reproduced from the original publication of the Sherlock Holmes stories in *The Strand Magazine*.

Was Newcomb the original Professor Moriarty?

"You have probably never heard of Professor Moriarty?" said he.

"Never."

"Ay, there's the genius and the wonder of the thing!" he cried.

"The Final Problem,"
The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

In Conan Doyle's adventures of Sherlock Holmes, the great detective is faced with an archcriminal, Professor James Moriarty. Doyle made his villain a memorable figure, armed not only with a gift for organizing criminal activity but with genius of a higher order.

In "The Final Problem" (1893), Holmes says of Moriarty:

> He is a man of good birth and excellent education, endowed by nature with a phenomenal mathematical faculty. At the age of twenty-one he wrote a treatise upon the binomial theorem, which has had a European vogue. On the strength of it he won the mathematical chair at one of our smaller universities.

Astronomers Ronald Schorn and Bradley Schaefer have both argued that, just as Doyle patterned some of his plots and characters after real incidents and people, Moriarty's identity as a respectable mathematics professor is borrowed from Simon Newcomb's life and achievements.

For instance, Newcomb's first attempt at a scientific article was a new demonstration of the binomial theorem* written when he was hardly twenty. Though it was never published, it set him on his career path.

Six years later, Newcomb was appointed a professor of mathematics of the United States Navy. In 1884, he became the acting head of the department of mathematics at Johns Hopkins. As Doyle believed in the unity of the English races, he may have considered Johns Hopkins to be "one of our smaller universities."

In *The Valley of Fear* (1914–1915), Holmes adds about Moriarty: "Is he not the celebrated author of *The Dynamics of an Asteroid*, a book which ascends to such rarefied heights of pure mathematics that it is said that there was no man in the scientific press capable of criticizing it?"

Indeed, early in his career, Newcomb wrote a series of papers on asteroids, culminating with a definitive work published in 1860, which did attract notice in Europe.

While the parallels are not exact, the double coincidence in topics is persuasive. In *The Valley of Fear*, Professor Moriarty also discusses eclipses with a policeman. This is basic astronomy, but Newcomb was closely involved with several famous eclipses.

Still, why would a British writer use a North American astronomer as his model? At the time, Newcomb was reaching the end of his career – and the pinnacle of his fame. Doyle may simply have seized upon the best-known mathematical astronomer of the day to imbue his Professor Moriarty with the required dash of genius.

On the other hand, a personal connection cannot be excluded, even at one remove. Newcomb travelled to Europe several times, visiting Scotland in 1870 after observing an eclipse in the Mediterranean. In Edinburgh, he met several university professors.

Did Conan Doyle or his mentor, Dr. Joseph Bell, meet with Newcomb? Doyle studied at the University of Edinburgh from 1876 to 1881, and the character of Sherlock Holmes is partly drawn from Bell, who taught there and was noted for his deductive feats.

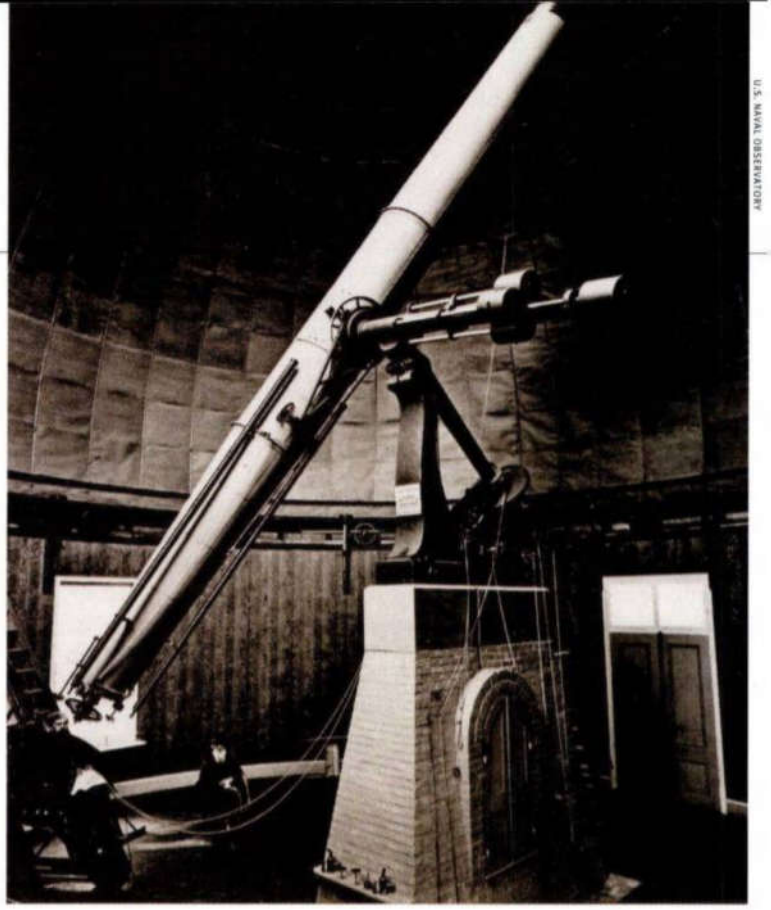
What is more likely is that Alfred Drayson, once attached to the Woolwich Naval Observatory, provided Doyle with information about a fellow astronomer. Drayson was an old friend who encouraged Doyle's interest in spiritualism and he has also been suggested as a model for Moriarty.

If Doyle needed a motive for attaching the traits of Newcomb to that of an archcriminal, it may be found in Newcomb's flirtation with psychic research. The American Society for Psychical Research was created in 1884 at the instigation of British scientists, and Newcomb became its first president, fully intending to ferret out the truth in psychic phenomena. By 1886, his investigations had proven fruitless and he penned a frankly skeptical condemnation of the whole enterprise.

Doyle had been interested in spiritualism since 1879, and he joined the British Society for Psychical Research in 1893, the year he wrote the first Moriarty story. That same year, Doyle's father had died, and his wife had been diagnosed with tuberculosis, lending particular urgency to Doyle's interest for signs of the soul's survival after death. If he did have Newcomb in mind, it was perhaps not solely as an astronomer but also as a skeptic hostile to his own beliefs. And so Doyle may not have scrupled to put a bit of Newcomb into Moriarty.

—J.-L. T.

*The binomial theorem gives the mathematical formula needed to calculate a sum raised to a power. For example $(x + y)k$.



U.S. NAVAL OBSERVATORY

Simon Newcomb (left) was appointed professor of mathematics at the United States Naval Observatory in Washington in 1861, in the early days of the Civil War. He remained there until his retirement in 1897. This picture was taken around 1873 when a twenty-six-inch refractor telescope – at the time North America's largest – was built and installed under his supervision.

seizure of Paris by the revolutionary Commune. Pressed by time, as he could not delay his return to North America, Newcomb found himself "mousing" among mouldering papers while the city was in the hands of the Communards and besieged by the regular army. His research was conducted within hearing of the siege guns. Sometimes, he would walk to a window and see flashes of artillery from one of the fortifications to the south.

He finished his work and made his departure three weeks before the army stormed the city. The observatory where he had worked was taken over by Commune forces and was badly shot up in the ensuing battle. Indeed, Newcomb was told that the Communards tried to blow themselves up with the building, the catastrophe only being narrowly averted.

Newcomb brought back from Paris a scientific treasure, "the greatest find I ever made." The old records documented the precise position of the Moon in the sky at various dates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In one swoop, Newcomb pushed back direct knowledge of the Moon's motion by seventy-five years, and with a less degree of accuracy another thirty years, back to 1645. It was the key to finding out how the Moon's motion around the Earth had changed over the years.

Simon Newcomb's life as an astronomer was not always so eventful. The Civil War gave him his start when staff at the Naval Observatory in Washington left to join the Confederacy, creating various openings. His new position allowed him to marry Mary Caroline Hassler in 1863. The couple would have three daughters. The war also saw Newcomb obtain his naturalization as a U.S. citizen, in June 1864, six years after his first application.

Even if Newcomb had secured a scientific education in the British provinces, he would never have enjoyed facilities equivalent to those of the Naval Observatory or the freedom that came in 1877 when he accepted the superintendency of the Nautical Almanac Office, which had moved to Washington. Canada had nothing like them before the twentieth century.

Moreover, Newcomb helped equip the observatory with North America's largest telescope, inaugurated in 1873. His example triggered a telescope race that soon left the Naval Observatory in the dust, but which allowed the United States to claim the world's greatest telescopes during the early years of the twentieth century.

Once in charge of the Nautical Almanac, Newcomb launched a major effort to determine anew the fundamental constants of astronomy in order to prepare new tables and formulas for use by astronomers and navigators, pushing the accuracy of astronomical theories to a new level. It was in the course of this work that he announced in 1882 an improved value for an unexplained shift in Mercury's orbit. The anomaly resisted all attempts at a solution until Einstein was able to explain it within the framework of general relativity.

Over the years, Newcomb eased into the role of the distinguished scientist. He authored astronomy textbooks and popularizations, works on economics, opinion pieces, and even some fiction. He was called upon to preside over several scientific societies. In 1876, he lectured at the newly created Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, turning his course into a best-selling book, *Popular Astronomy*.

Newcomb's life work in the field of fundamental astronomy stood up for decades. Until 1960, the U.S. almanacs used by astronomers and by navigators in ships

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December 2003/January 2004

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CHARLOTTE GRAY
LISTENING TO "THOUSANDS, MILLIONS OF VOICES"

The 2003 Pierre Berton Award honours Charlotte Gray of Ottawa for three beautifully written and warmly received historical biographies, *Mrs. King*, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, and *Flint & Feather*. Her new book, *Canada: a Portrait in Letters, 1800–2000*, appeared in October. She recently talked with Christopher Moore.

Do you know Pierre Berton?

Gray: No. But I have admired him ever since I came to Canada twenty-four years ago. My most recent purchase at the Crosby flea market [near her family cottage outside Ottawa] was several volumes of The Canadian Centennial Library, published in 1965, with Pierre Berton as the editor-in-chief. I carted my volumes back to the cottage, and started reading. The prose is as energetic and engaging today as when it was written, nearly forty years ago.

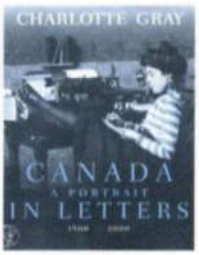
You used to write political journalism for magazines. How did you become an historical biographer?

Gray: I came to Canada in 1979 with my husband George Anderson, a Canadian in the federal civil service. I was already a magazine writer in Britain, and he assured me I could do the same in Ottawa. But the magazines were in Toronto, and all they wanted from Ottawa was politics. As a crash course in a nation's identity, there is nothing better than to write about its national politics.

But as my husband grew more senior in the civil service, it became potentially embarrassing to write about Ottawa's politics. And frankly, I grew bored. I wanted to write about social history, the texture of daily life. There was a great dearth of that kind of thing, and my great friend and mentor Sandra Gwyn had demonstrated the need so well in *The Private Capital* and *Tapestry of War*.

You have written lives of women in history. Did you see a dearth of that subject, too?

Gray: From my writing about politics I knew I was more "comfortable," perhaps, writing about women, though I think I can write about anyone, and my next book is about a man and a woman. As well, I write from primary sources, from lived experience. And it was always women who wrote about the textures of daily life, who wrote the letters and diaries.



We may think of Victorian Canada as the depth of fustiness and tedium, yet you have set three books there.

Gray: I love that era. I felt I had grown up in the remains of that time in Britain, and you can see vestiges of it in Canada too, in the buildings for instance. I grew up in Sheffield, a very Victorian town, very like Toronto in fact. They both grew rapidly in the nineteenth century. They both had a very strong sense of themselves. Both developed wealth and snobbery very fast, yet they worried about being overshadowed by larger centres. When I came here, one of the things I could identify with was the society that had grown up in that Victorian era.

Canadians often say no one is interested in our history, yet you found an audience for a book about Mackenzie King's mother!

Gray: Well, I do always write about the life and times, rather than the events of a single life. The main character structures the book, but my story is always what it was like in those times. What was it like to travel across Canada in the 1890s? What was it like to break ground in the backwoods?

My favourite compliment is being told, "I learned so much from your book, but it felt like reading a novel." That's in the style. People have said, "You were telling my grandmother's story." They understood about a family trying to make it socially in difficult circumstances in Toronto, or struggling on a backwoods farm. I wanted to explore that period when Canada went from being a rough frontier place to being the nation that went into the First World War.

Tell us about your new book, Canada: A Portrait in Letters.

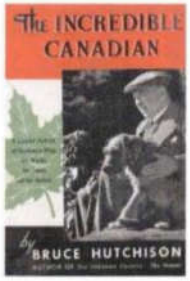
Gray: I was determined to make it 200 years in 200 letters, but I could not get down below 217! By the end, I was thrilled. The history of Canada really did seem to be there in the letters. I just got that sense of thousands, millions of voices speaking to us.

The Pierre Berton Award

In 1994 Canada's National History Society established the Pierre Berton Award to recognize individuals or institutions that have made outstanding contributions to popularizing Canadian history. Pierre Berton was the first recipient of the award and agreed to have the award named after him. Other recipients include authors Jacques Lacoursière, Peter C. Newman, and the late James H. Gray, radio columnist Bob Johnstone, the CRB Foundation, producer of Heritage Minutes, the CBC, producer of *Canada, A People's History*, and the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering.

My Favourite Canadian History Books

PIERRE BERTON

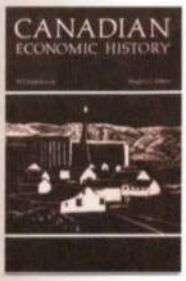


I think my favourite book of popular history, and certainly one that had its affect on me professionally, was Bruce Hutchison's ***The Incredible Canadian***, an unauthorized biography of Mackenzie King, which is a joy to read.

In spite of the fact that King's own diaries were not available at the time, Hutchison was able to get under the former prime minister's skin and show what made him tick. "It's all in Hansard," he once reminded me. Certainly he transformed Hansard's coldly objective reporting into high drama. There, in Hutchison's accounts, the fevered debates of the King period come alive. One gets a distinct I-was-there feeling when reading Hutchison. And his descriptions of some of the main characters in the story are priceless. I learned a great deal from him for he was a master storyteller as well as a distinguished journalist. He wrote his book while penning a daily column and actually acting as editor of two newspapers, the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, from his home in Victoria. I find it distressing when I mention his name to young writers and receive the answer: "Who's he?"

The Incredible Canadian: A Candid Portrait of Mackenzie King – His Works, His Times, and His Nation by Bruce Hutchison. Longmans, Green, Toronto, 1952.

Pierre Berton is a noted chronicler of Canadian history. His latest book is *The Joy of Writing: A Guide for Writers, Disguised as a Literary Memoir*.



JOANNE BURGESS

The Canadian history book that has most influenced me is undoubtedly W.T. Easterbrook and Hugh G.J. Aitken's ***Canadian Economic History***. I read this book for the first time in 1971, when I was an undergraduate in economics. Published in 1956, its six hundred pages cover five hundred years of Canadian history in an efficient, well-structured, and well-written fashion. Recognized as a classic, *Canadian Economic History* has been reprinted and revised many times since.

The book's authors, as well as Irene Spry, the remarkable teacher who made it required reading in her economic history seminar, introduced me to the grand themes of Canadian economic history: the fur trade, the empire of the St. Lawrence, the saga of the CPR, the wheat boom, the struggles of the labour movement. Through it, I also discovered the founding fathers of Canadian economic history: Harold Innis, Donald Creighton, and Arthur Lower. In its pages, I learned of events, interpretations, and questions that fascinated me then and continue to be the focus of my professional career today.

Canadian Economic History by W.T. Easterbrook and Hugh G.J. Aitken, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1988.

Joanne Burgess is professor of history at the University of Quebec in Montreal, specializing in Canadian economic and social history.

JANE URQUHART

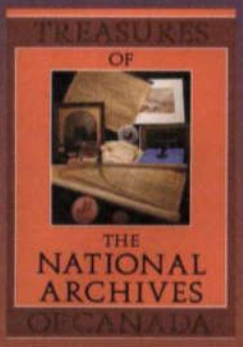
As a writer of fiction I have found myself drawn to the books in the local history section of the many public libraries I have haunted over the years. It is between the covers of these sometimes very modest—or sometimes very ambitious—publications that I have discovered the intimate, personal histories that have inspired and informed my work.

There are, of course, many, many local history titles to talk about, but since I have been asked to mention just one I shall do so. ***How Firm a Foundation*** by Eileen Argyris (Boston Mills Press, 2000) is a lively, engaging exploration of the history of Cramahe Township in Ontario's Northumberland County. Admirably researched and wonderfully—almost eccentrically—illustrated by personal photographs, this book brings to life the stories of determined settlers, ambitious tycoons, spinster librarians, small-town newspaper editors, war heroes, lake captains, and a variety of other colourful characters. The writing is particularly good in this history, and the book itself is a beautiful object. It will be of interest to those who have no connection to the township in question (as well as those who do) in that, as is the case with all good stories, in the hands of Argyris, the tales associated with one township's past become larger than themselves.

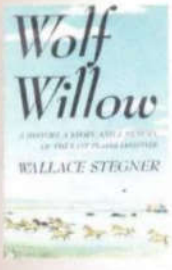
How Firm a Foundation by Eileen Argyris. Boston Mills Press, Erin, Ontario, 2000.

Jane Urquhart won the 1997 Governor General's Award for her novel, *The Underpainter*. Her latest novel, *The Stonecarvers*, was published in 2001.

From the History Society's Library...Oldies but Goodies



Treasures from the National Archives, which celebrated its twentieth anniversary of publication in 2002, is a handsome hardcover homage to the importance, beauty, and cultural value of the extraordinary holdings of the National Archives in Ottawa. Richly illustrated and well-designed, the book is a true, technicolour celebration of Canada's history as told through maps, art, stamps, manuscripts, film, recordings, and a variety of print records. It deserves to be reissued. It also warrants updating to reflect the growth of the collection over the last two decades and the important additions to what has been referred to as our "national scrapbook." It is a wonderful book, and an excellent reference source that we're proud to have in the CNHS library and use regularly and with great care.

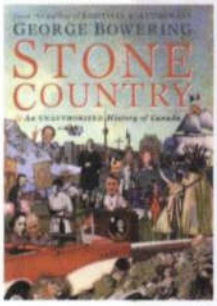


BILL WAISER

One of my favourite books is Wallace Stegner's classic, ***Wolf Willow***. Described as a history, a story, and a memory of the last prairie frontier, Stegner examines the unsuccessful attempt by a generation of American homesteaders, including his own Iowa family, to turn the semiarid ranch land of southwestern Saskatchewan into farms after 1908. He explains at the beginning how the "assumption of all of us, child or adult, was that this was a new country and that a new country has no history." But Stegner quickly discovers the deeply human stories of the region and its transnational history. He also nicely captures the sense of the land—its emptiness and, of course, its weather, including "the wind which blows all of the time in way to stiffen your hair and rattles the eyes in your head." Most of all, Stegner reflects on life on the prairies, suggesting that "a Westerner is less a person than a continuing adaptation … less a place than a process."

Wolf Willow: A History, a Story, and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier by Wallace Stegner. Penguin Books Canada, Toronto, 2000.

Bill Waiser is a professor of history at the University of Saskatchewan, specializing in Western and Northern Canadian history.



By Chris Rattle

Booknotes

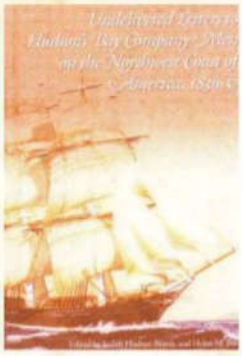
George Bowering is our nation's most honoured poet—recipient of all manner of awards and, of course, official poet laureate. With ***Stone Country*** he sets out also to be the "unauthorized" historian of our country. He certainly offers no standard survey—it is clever and amusing, smug and annoying. He writes informally, almost colloquially—bereft of poetic eloquence. A few chapter heads suggest his style: "Make War, Not Colonies," "Get Riel," or "Mackenzie Kink." As he confesses early on: "Everything I have to say here should be understood as lying between quotation marks."

Bowering presents Canadian history as a parade of persecutions. We are, he seems to feel, a nation of the oppressed. Somebody was always being

Undelivered Letters

Undelivered Letters to Hudson's Bay Company Men on the Northwest Coast of America, 1830–57. Edited by Judith Hudson Beattie and Helen M. Buss, UBC Press, Vancouver, 2003

Reviewed by Peter C. Newman



AT FIRST GLANCE, this volume's awkward title promises a dreary literary journey as it comes close to sounding like a satirical send-up of the ultimate, self-indulgent academic book project.

It is nothing of the kind. In their relentless search for authenticity, coauthors Judith Hudson Beattie and Helen Buss have struck the motherlode. How best to document the lives of Company traders, stuck at the most distant department of the vast Hudson's Bay Company's empire? Why of course: publish the mailed but unclaimed correspondence of these hardy folk and their loved ones at home.

Delivered letters disappear or remain private. Official journals record trading patterns, fur supplies, upkeep expenses, and all the dreary minutiae of the Company's business. Only by publishing these letters that could not be delivered and found their way into the HBC Archives are we accorded the privilege of peeking into the private lives of the factors who manned the wilderness outposts and left behind parents and loved ones, and learn the details how their lives played themselves out.

It is not a cheerful read. But it reeks of authenticity. America's Northwest Coast during the late nineteenth century was no utopia. Survival was the highest aspiration; despair and penury the fate of most family members left behind.

This book is no dead letter office. Almost every piece of correspondence is a heart-rending appeal for succour, financial and otherwise. Repetition does not dull the reader's senses. Curiously, the Company's lack of generosity (even humanity) is seldom criticized or even mentioned.

Yet there is a certain patina of desperation in most of this writing. Since most letters took two years to reach their destinations (around Cape Horn), with replies taking equally long, writers at both ends were never sure that their sons or parents would still be alive to open the envelopes. That explains why so many salutations end with invocations such as: "I remain your dear and loving father till death ..."

Mutinies aboard the HBC ships, both attempted and real, are alluded to, which are not mentioned in official histories.

"Let me beg and entret you to come home for you are idling away the prime of your life ... God bless you my dear Boy. Your affection(ate) Mother," is a typical entry. The odd Jane Austen is introduced, but most are illiterate, abandoned mothers and sweethearts, pining their fate.

A few quibbles: It was a waste of money and space to reproduce some of the actual letters, since they are wholly illegible and add little to the volume's emotional appeal. Since they are in quest of authenticity, the coauthors overdo their zealousness. A letter written from Fort Vancouver on October 2, 1832, is typical: "Dear Sister I rite thes few lines to you to you [repetition] hoping to find you in good [crossed out], etc." Does it really add to our knowledge to have those, and so many more stage directions, included? I don't think so.

But these are quibbles indeed. This volume is solidly edited and intelligently produced. It illuminates a hitherto untouched aspect of the HBC's magnificent history. It ought to become the template for similar collections of unclaimed letters from other HBC districts in other times.

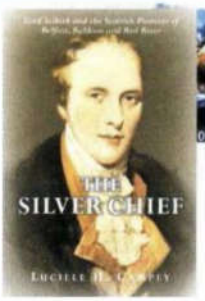
Peter C. Newman, winner of the 1999 Pierre Berton Award, is the author of a trilogy about the HBC, as well as many other probing accounts of powerful figures and institutions in Canadian history. He is currently writing his autobiography.

Undelivered Letters is available through the History Society Book Club.

cheated or exploited by somebody else: natives by Europeans, French by English, immigrants by governments, taxpayers by politicians, Westerners by Ontarians, and, of course, everybody by "USAmericans" (as Bowering persistently calls them). Indeed, anti-American asides—vigorous, some almost vicious—are scattered through the book, no doubt delighting many readers.

Despite its claim to be "meticulously researched," no history—certainly not this one—is error free. The four pages on the Upper Canada Rebellion (a subject of my own research) contained eight factual mistakes and at least as many disputable observations.

Bowering's title (presumably) comes from a brief musing on stone pieces as the only human artifacts not destroyed by "winds of time and the acid in the earth." Ancient peoples lived "in a broad stone country, and along the spine of that country they left stones that they had banged together in order to make sharp points." The image—a few sharp bits enduring despite a hostile world—is a dismal one. Surely it reveals more about Bowering than it does about Canada.



Two other books worth noting—and more worthy—are focused works by competent historians. In *The Silver Chief*, Lucile Campey presents a fresh take on Lord Selkirk. There is, she shows, much more to his story than the Red River settlement and its ordeals. Selkirk was also responsible for earlier Scottish settlements in Prince Edward Island and in Baldoon (later Wallaceburg) in Upper Canada. This work is significant because, along with Selkirk's adventures, Campey considers many questions about the settlers themselves—who they were and where they came from, why they emigrated, what happened to them and what was their impact. Social historians and genealogists will like the names and personal details. And Selkirk comes through as imaginative and compassionate, an admirable idealist who was not entirely done in by his critics and enemies.

Another book—at last!—is a careful and comprehensive study of the Battle of Queenston Heights, the first real clash of the War of 1812. For months American and British troops occupied opposite sides of the Niagara River, each watching for signs of an invasion by the other, neither knowing quite where or when. By mid-October, with time running out, an ill-prepared and poorly commanded American force crossed over and captured high ground above the village of Queenston. British General Isaac Brock rushed to the scene and without pausing to assess the strength of the enemy led an uphill charge. In this foolhardy rush—a classic case of a forlorn hope—Brock, an easy target, was killed. But the American effort was already in disarray. Ultimately British troops, native allies, and Canadian militia repelled the invaders. Military historian Robert Malcomson, writing with clarity and compassion, presents a full and balanced account of the affair and of each of the principal personalities. Maps and illustrations abound. Thanks to designer-publisher Robin Brass, the book is a pleasure to read and a joy to hold. *A Very Brilliant Affair* is an entirely praiseworthy piece of work.

Stone Country: An Unauthorized History of Canada by George Bowering. Penguin Canada, Toronto, 2003. $36.00.

A Very Brilliant Affair: The Battle of Queenston Heights, 1812 by Robert Malcolmson. Robin Brass Studio, Toronto. $37.95.

The Silver Chief: Lord Selkirk and the Scottish Pioneers of Belfast, Baldoon and Red River by Lucille Campey. Natural Heritage Books, Toronto, 2003. $24.95.

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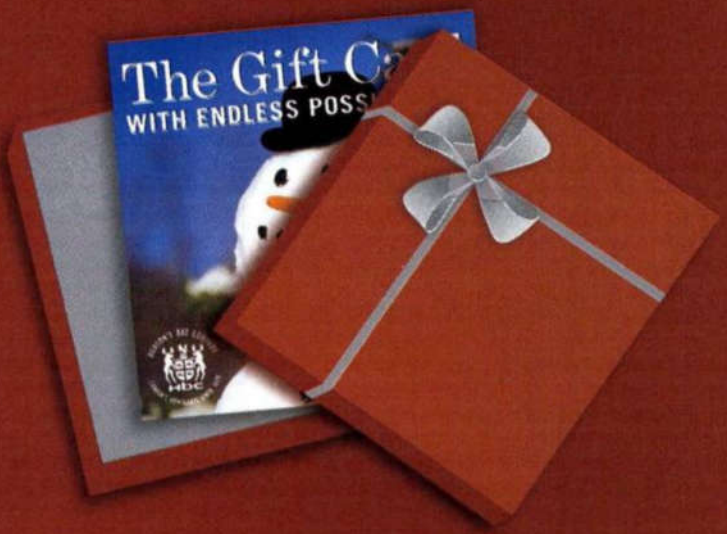

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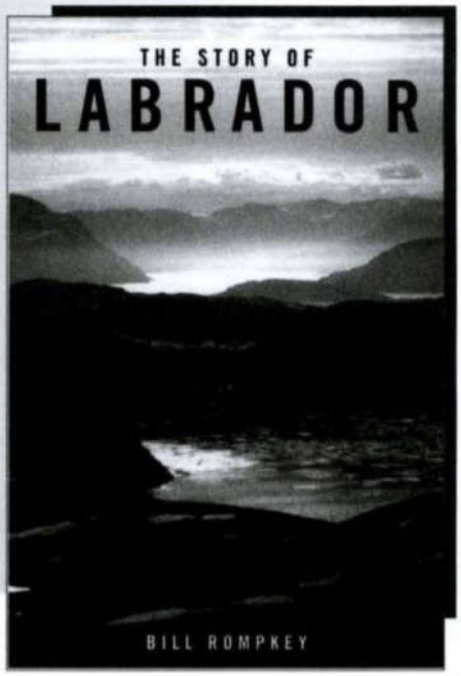

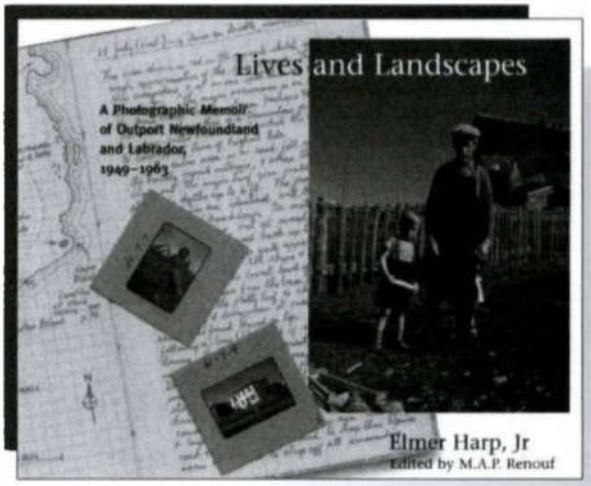
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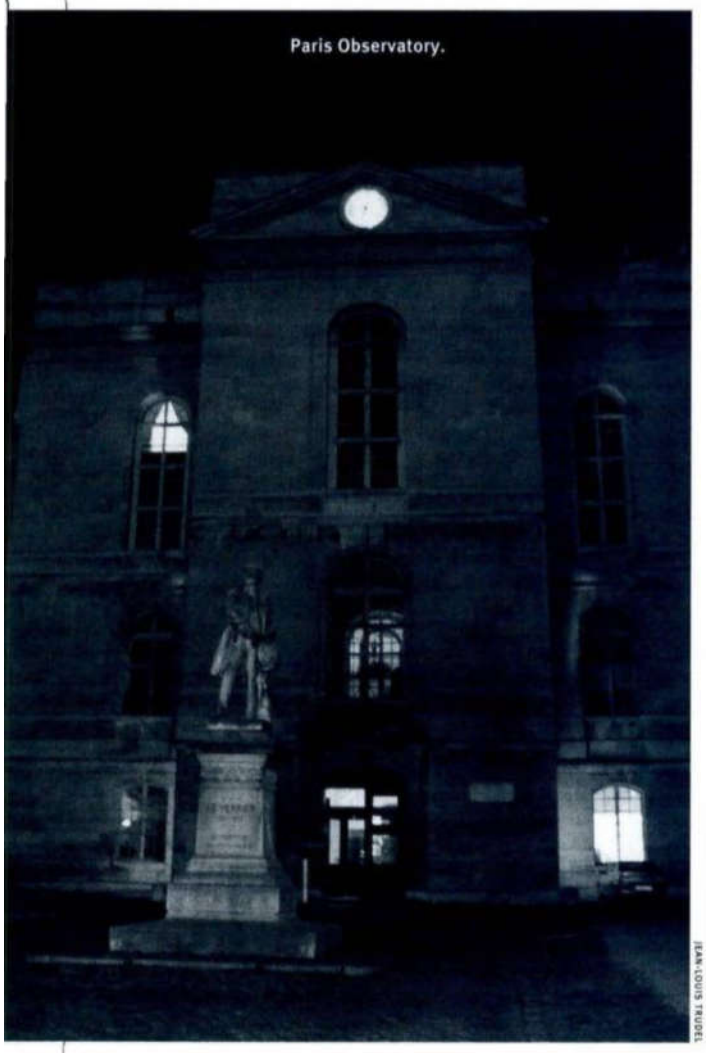
and planes relied on its results. Indeed, these standards were not wholly superseded until 1984, when new values prompted by more data were effected, though they are still occasionally used today. The precise calculation of Mercury's orbit was essential to the general theory of relativity, as Einstein later acknowledged.

Newcomb's impact cannot be underestimated. He was the world's top astronomer at the turn of the century, and his tireless advocacy of scientific research in his adopted country led to the eventual preeminence of the United States in astronomy.



Paris Observatory.

JEAN-LOUIS TRUDEL

Outside professional circles, Newcomb is mainly remembered today as a stodgy Victorian scientist. He is credited with no landmark discoveries and only specialists appreciate the monumental thoroughness and completeness of his calculations. Rather unjustly, some recall instead that, in October 1903, two months before the first flight of the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk, he famously announced that heavier-than-air machines would never fly. (His reasoning was correct, but his premises were flawed.)

Rarely is it noted that he was born in what is now Canada. The *Canadian Encyclopedia* does not mention him.* In 2000, Canada Post refused to put him on a stamp.

If the older Newcomb had been granted the power to peer into the future that his younger self had lacked on the road to Saint John, he might not have been surprised by this lack of recognition. The land of his birth, he might think, still failed to honour the life of the mind.

It would surely have been one of his few regrets. In 1909, death came quickly to Newcomb. Cancer of the bladder was diagnosed, but contemporary medicine had little to offer. Though he worked till the end, dictating to stenographers when he could no longer write, he must have known that his life's work was essentially complete and would stand the test of time.

In 1904, on the occasion of the St. Louis world's fair, a fellow scholar judged him "perhaps of all Americans the most honored throughout the world among the peers of the realm of science." In 1898, an astronomer had already acknowledged "the undoubted fact, that he has done more than any other American since Franklin to make American science respected and honored throughout the entire world."

In his autobiography, Newcomb stressed his New England ancestry. Yet, what counts is that he came out of Canada with a knowledge of English and French, a mastery of geometry, the beginnings of a method, and a burning thirst for learning. In the end, American science may owe more than it thinks to the world of cold and darkness of Simon Newcomb's Maritime childhood.

Jean-Louis Trudel is a Montreal writer.

Et Cetera

A Scientist's Voice in American Culture: Simon Newcomb and the Rhetoric of Scientific Method **by Albert E. Moyer. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992.**

The Reminiscences of an Astronomer **by Simon Newcomb. Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1903.**

*However, he does appear in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, volume 13.

Driving Miss Purity

Controversy around air pollution issues swirled last year as Canada signed the Kyoto Protocol. But this wasn't the first time gasoline emissions and the environment had been a concern. The problem was addressed by the Clean Air Car Race in 1970, at which one Canadian entry did more than turn a few heads.

by Carol Cooper

Popping flashbulbs and jostling journalists greeted Miss Purity, a Canadian custom-built car, at the finish of the Clean Air Car Race at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), in Pasadena, California, on August 30, 1970. The Rose Bowl Queen, in attendance for the occasion, immediately handed Douglas Venn, the car's driver, her signature flower. He responded with a kiss.

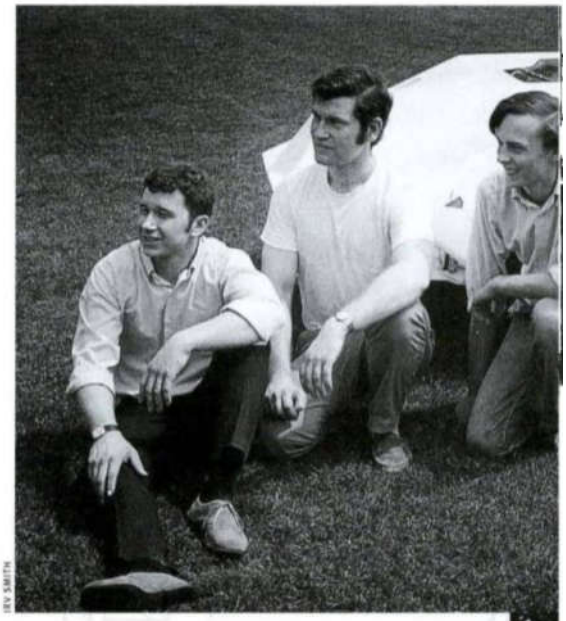
As Miss Purity and her crew from the University of Toronto pulled up to park on Caltech's Olive Walk with other race contestants, she again faced a crowd of media and interested onlookers.

Venn, codrivers Steve Baker and Juri Otsason, and the rest of the Miss Purity entourage found nothing new about the race-end commotion. Throughout the seven-day, 5,800-kilometre event and its week-long preliminary activities, the U of T team constantly found its unique car in the spotlight. Miss Purity, a hybrid car built from the ground up especially for the race, with her sporty white fibreglass body, maple-leaf taillights, and custom licence plate reading UTI, looked like none of the other forty-two entrants.

The media loved her looks, which included gull-winged doors and rear-window louvres, and Miss Purity became a star. Newspaper clippings covering the race filled a two-inch thick album. CTV reporter Henry Champ covered Miss Purity's trip from Toronto to Boston for the race's start and back again to Toronto for its first leg. The car figured prominently in the September 4, 1970 centrefold of *Life* magazine. Throughout the race, faculty advisor Professor Frank Hooper gave two or three media interviews a day.

Special mention was made of Miss Purity in a *Road and Track* article and in a documentary film about the race, narrated by Orson Welles. When she appeared at the Clean Air Congress in Washington, D.C., in the fall of 1970 (an event also attended by Canadian environmentalist Maurice Strong), Miss Purity sat prominently under the screen that premiered the film.

"Miss Purity wins race and $5,000," shouted a somewhat misleading headline in the *Toronto Daily Star* a few days after race end. Although the Canadian car did indeed receive the money, she was a co-winner in the hybrid-electric class, one of the race's five divisions.[1] And while that placed her in contention to be chosen as the overall champion, an entry from Wayne State University picked up the top prize.



With only a few months to put the car together, Miss Purity's creators had to be quick and inventive. The results of their ingenuity were impressive – the chassis, made from parts of a 1970 Chevelle and a 1967 Corvair, would support a custom-designed fibreglass body.

[1] According to Clean Air Car Race definitions, a hybrid-electric car is one in which the batteries are recharged by an on-board power source – in Miss Purity's case, the internal combustion engine. Those in the pure electric car class run on batteries charged by outside sources, such as the recharging stations provided throughout the CACR.

Ahead of her time, Miss Purity, named for her environmental contributions, or lack thereof, travelled across North America in 1970 showing off her good looks and innovative technology: she could run on propane and electricity, greatly reducing harmful emissions.

Miss Purity's drivers (left to right): University of Toronto students Steve Baker, Douglas Venn, and Juri Otsason.

In 1970, thirty-two years before Canada signed the Kyoto Accord, concern about air quality was already running high. A U.S. government report in 1968 had identified gasoline motor vehicles as contributing 38.1 percent of the 82.1 million tonnes of air pollution emitted annually from transportation sources.

In response, MIT and Caltech organized the Clean Air Car Race (sometimes known as the Children's Crusade or Woodstock on Wheels), which followed in the tire treads of the 1968 Great Electric Car Race. The CACR's goals were to involve educational institutions in improving automotive technology and control of pollution, bring industry and educational institutions together, and encourage new, cleaner means of propelling vehicles. Nor was the event a typical race, with cars side-by-side pelting down a raceway. Instead it was more of a rally – an opportunity to show the low-polluting cars to the public – that took place on public highways.

Venn led the team of U of T undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and university staff that built Miss Purity – named for her clean emissions – especially for the race. Hearing about the Clean Air Car Race at a Society of Automotive Engineers meeting in Detroit in January 1970, Venn set Miss Purity's wheels in motion. He convinced the engineering faculty that the U of T should enter the race, and Miss Purity became his masters of engineering thesis project. Funded by bequests and in-kind donations, the U of T team, like the other entrants, had little time to prepare. It made good use of what it had.

While most vehicles entered consisted of modified internal combustion engines in factory-produced bodies, Miss Purity, built between March and August 1970, was one of only four fabricated, three hybrid-electric, and two Canadian vehicles in the race. Working around the five lead-acid batteries on each side of the chassis and a generator in front, the team constructed a chassis from a 1970 Chevelle front end and a 1967 Corvair transaxle and rear suspension as the framework for a fibreglass body custom designed by Ontario College of Art graduate Ken Bell.

Beneath her jaunty beauty, Miss Purity also boasted some technological brains. She sported a Chevrolet V-8 engine, modified to run on propane (then an uncommon fuel), a generator, an electric motor, a catalytic converter – a device designed to convert pollutants into carbon

Canada's Other Hybrid Car

Known as Galt storage-gas-electric automobiles, two other Canadian hybrid cars were built in 1914 by Moffat St. Clare and Eddy Fleming, owners of the Galt Motor Company in Galt (now part of Cambridge), Ontario. They built the vehicles with two-cylinder, two-cycle engines that operated on a mixture of gas and kerosene. The engine turned a generator that ran the car electrically. Four batteries held power in reserve.

The vehicles reached forty-eight kilometres per hour, could travel twenty-four to thirty-two kilometres on batteries alone, and featured a single "Cyclops" headlight.

One of the two cars was sold,

The Galt Tourist Model E.

misused, returned to the company, and scrapped. But St. Clare made good use of the second. He operated it for promotional work, experimentation, everyday driving, and in some unusual circumstances: when the electricity went out at the town's Dixon Street movie theatre, the Galt car was hooked up to the projector and the show rolled on.

St. Clare was unsuccessful in raising money to produce the car and finally stored it in 1927. In 1941, a Galt engineer named Wallace Fairgrieve bought the hybrid, put on a rounded radiator, crown fenders, and sixteen-inch wheels, and drove it daily. A vintage car enthusiast bought it in 1946, and today the Galt car rests in the Canadian Automotive Museum in Oshawa, Ontario.

—C. C.

dioxide and water and an innovation not found on Canadian cars until 1974 – and a high-speed, custom-made device known as a chopper. Placed close to the electric motor, the chopper interrupted the DC voltage from the batteries when the electrical system was engaged, allowing the electric motor to run at variable speeds. In 1970, this technology was barely a year old and not in common use.

Among the few cars in the race with a custom-designed propulsion system, Miss Purity ran in at least three modes: on the propane-fuelled internal combustion engine; on the electric motor, powered either by both the generator and the batteries or by the batteries alone; or on combined propane/battery power. Also custom designed for the car was a premixing plenum chamber, which maximized fuel-air mixing prior to combustion and enhanced the fuel burning.

Working at an increasingly intense pace, the team did not leave the U of T campus during the last week of preparation. After screwing on the rear window (left off for access to the electric workings), attaching the newly chromed bumpers, sending home for clothes, and taking a quick test drive around the university, the three students drove Miss Purity to Boston on the weekend of August 15, 1970. Professors Frank Hooper and Irv Smith, Douglas Venn's father Fred, and others accompanied the expedition in a station wagon and truck lent by General Motors.

Once in Boston, a week of prerace activities included emissions and performance testing and a huge send-off banquet the night before the race began.[2]

The next day, Monday, August 24, the race began with the 870-kilometre leg to Toronto and a massive reception at City Hall.

While leaving Varsity Stadium in Toronto for the second leg to Detroit, Miss Purity backed over some debris and her muffler and tailpipe fell off. This was to become her Achilles heel. (Reattached with jerry-rigged repairs, it would fall off at least another three times throughout the race.) After the initial patch-up, the car made Detroit and with the other entrants, underwent emissions-testing.

All was not clear driving for the Canadian car, which would make subsequent legs through Champaign, Illinois, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Odessa, Texas, and Tucson, Arizona, before ending in Pasadena. A tense moment came on day four of the race, outside St. Louis, Missouri, when a connecting rod broke, puncturing the oil pan and spewing oil throughout the engine. After a fourteen-hour repair, car and crew hit the road, driving for twenty-four hours straight to catch up with the race in Odessa, much to the surprise of the other entrants. From there she would complete her trek.

Aside from co-winning in her class, Miss Purity ranked in the midrange in performance tests. Out of a possible 1,000 points, which included testing for noise, acceleration, braking, handling, and manoeuvrability, Miss Purity placed in the midrange with 473. And out of another possible 1,000 points for fuel economy, she fell into the upper middle range with 649. Tests showed her emissions met 1975 standards for nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxides, though levels of the latter were far below those demanded today.

Following the final ceremony, the U of T team travelled up the West Coast to Canada and across the country to Toronto, presenting the car at universities along the way. At the end of it all, as Miss Purity drove up University Avenue in Toronto on her way to the garage, her muffler fell off a final time.

Interest in Miss Purity still ran high after the race. Along with appearing at

[2] Miss Purity and her team were chosen to deliver invitations for the banquet to the mayor of Boston and the governor of Massachusetts. After dropping off the governor's invitation, Miss Purity refused to start, requiring a push-start from her entourage. A large photo of the event, snapped by a gloating press, appeared in a Boston newspaper that evening, accompanied by the words, "Certainly there's no pollution from this car. No, not when it's powered by muscle."

the Clean Air Congress, she underwent emissions testing in 1971 at the U of T, was given a new engine designed to run on propane, and received changes in the electric drive system. After Miss Purity spent some time in storage, the university sold her for one dollar to the National Research Council. Undergraduate student Don Buchan, who had originally helped with her construction, accompanied her to Ottawa, where he spent the summers of 1974 and 1975 working on her. There in the engine laboratory, Miss Purity had extensive modifications done on her electric drive system and underwent more testing.

But once the studies were over, and with no potential for commercial development, Miss Purity was left to fade into obscurity. Now she sits in a residential Ottawa garage, minus her electrics, a dusty reminder of another era.

Though hybrid vehicles first appeared ninety years ago (see sidebar, left) the environmental heydays of the 1970s seemed a logical time to reintroduce them.

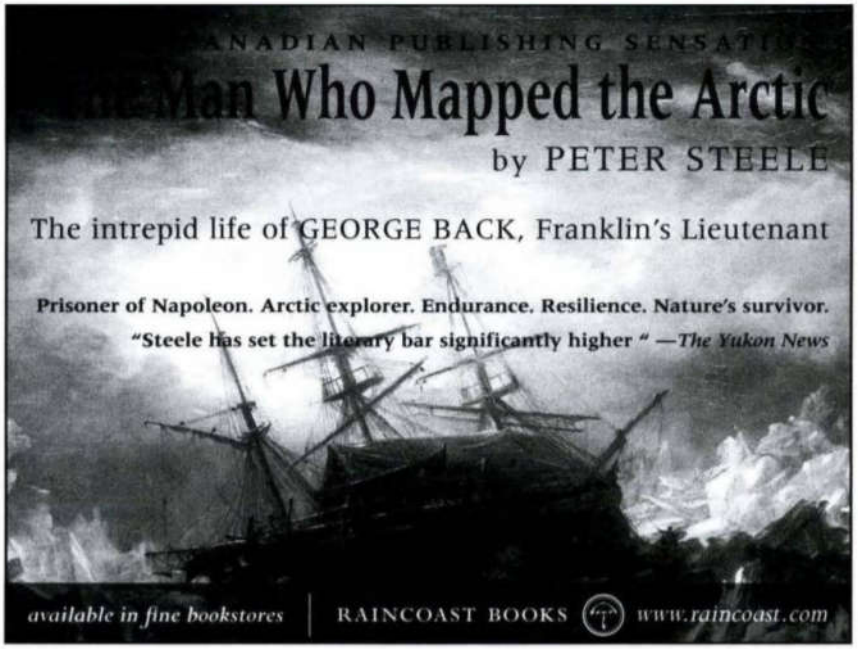
The major American car companies dabbled with designs for alternate vehicles during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s – General Motors built a hybrid car that could reach sixty-five kilometres per hour; American Motors came up with a steam-powered Ambassador and an electric car whose batteries were not strong enough for long distances; and Chrysler worked on a turbine-powered car. But these companies were more concerned with meeting tightening emissions standards and making cars more fuel-efficient in response to the 1973 oil shortage than in mass-producing hybrids.

Industry spokespeople today cite low consumer demand and high production costs as deterrents for not having introduced hybrids in the 1970s. Now Toyota and Honda have introduced hybrid vehicles, with Mazda and the American car manufacturers following close behind. Yet Ford sees hybrids as an interim step on the way to fuel-cell vehicles[3] and GM to those powered by improved diesel engines.

It seems Miss Purity and her hybrid kin will never be a strong presence on North American highways.

[3] Hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles have the potential to dramatically cut the quantity of greenhouse-gas emissions. The hydrogen used in the cells, extracted from natural gas or petrol, reacts with oxygen to produce energy, with water the only byproduct.

Carol Cooper is a freelance writer who lives in Aurora, Ontario, and prefers walking to driving cars of any type.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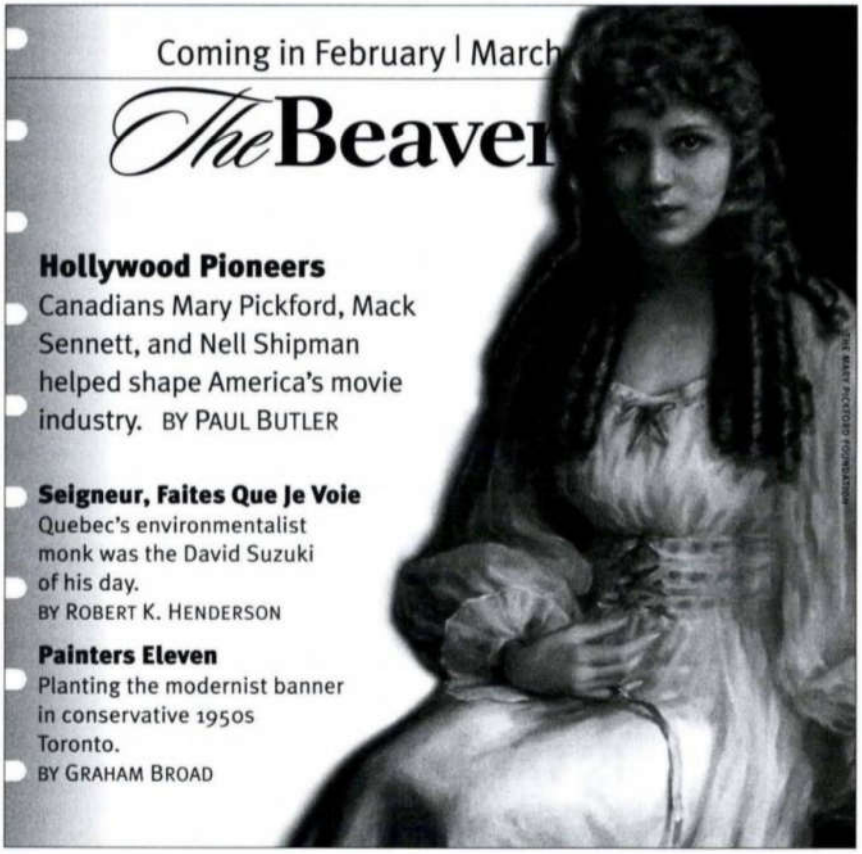
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Hollywood Pioneers
Canadians Mary Pickford, Mack Sennett, and Nell Shipman helped shape America's movie industry. BY PAUL BUTLER
Seigneur, Faites Que Je Voie
Quebec's environmentalist monk was the David Suzuki of his day.
BY ROBERT K. HENDERSON
Painters Eleven
Planting the modernist banner in conservative 1950s Toronto.
BY GRAHAM BROAD

How do you cross a body of water in Canada? By canoe. What if it's winter? Use an *ice* canoe.

"Upon the Frozen Strait"

by Matt Jackson

From 1827 to 1917, before the advent of dependable ferries, small iceboats were used to carry mail to and from the mainland across the Northumberland Strait to Prince Edward Island. Winter crossings were dangerous and crew and passengers could sometimes be stranded for days.

To reach the capes with light of day,
It was our hope and prayer
Our hopes were turned to bitter
doubts,
Our doubts to grim despair.
Alas! the naked fact is out,
What now must be our fate?
For lost we are, without a doubt
Upon the frozen strait.
—by Philip Farrell, Sturgeon, P.E.I.
(circa 1885)

In February of every year hundreds of people line the banks of the St. Lawrence River to watch the annual ice canoe race at Quebec City's winter carnival. It's been happening since 1954, and it's always a heart-rending experience. Imagine being on the river with bone-chilling winds, powerful currents, and temperatures that can plummet below minus forty degrees Celsius. Add to that a pace that often causes participants to reach a heart rate of 180 beats per minute while pushing their 125-kilogram canoes through a maze of jumbled ice blocks, mashing and heaving and grinding together. Even for spectators it can be a painful experience, but ask the *canotiers de glace* and they'll confirm that

Pulling a Boat Across the Ice, Quebec **(top) by John B. Wilkinson. This late nineteenth-century watercolour evokes the exertion required to navigate a boat through ice.**

it's pretty much the longest two hours of your life.

While the race at the Carnaval de Québec is itself a piece of history, the ice canoe existed long before Bonhomme – Quebec's jolly snowman mascot – could be found posing for pictures beside frosted-up ice-canoe competitors. The first ice canoes were built out of necessity by Quebec's working men during the late 1600s, mainly because island communities scattered up and down the St. Lawrence had no way of reaching the mainland during the annual freeze-up and break-up of the river. Boats plied the water in the summer, of course, and during the winter months settlers would cross the river using ice bridges. Yet during the shoulder seasons – when the river was a treacherous zone of water, slush, and floating ice blocks – food, mail, and medicine were effectively cut off from island communities. These included settlements on Île d'Orléans (which lies just east of Quebec City), as well as many of the islands further east.

While the kevlar canoes of today are considered bulky and cumbersome, they can't begin to compare with the boats constructed by the early Québécois. These canoes weighed more than 180 kilograms and were sometimes over nine metres long. They were sheathed along the bottom with a robust layer of tin to protect against boat-sinking ice blocks, and the iceboat captains and crew were fitted with harnesses made from leather straps that were attached to the canoes with short lengths of chain. These harnesses were primarily used for pulling canoes across obstacles, much like Arctic huskies would pull a sled, yet the harnesses also had a second purpose. At times men would break through the ice, or slide off an ice pan into water so cold it threatened to seize their hearts. The harness kept them from slipping under for good.

If the St. Lawrence was treacherous, the most desperate place for iceboat captains would eventually prove to be Northumberland Strait and the crossing between Île St. Jean (Prince Edward Island) and the mainland. The first person to propose such a crossing was governor Walter Patterson, a charismatic Irishman who first travelled to the island in 1770. He suggested the journey mainly because winter had arrived early in 1774, imprisoning his dispatches for England in Charlottetown Harbour. Since the governor already knew of winter crossings by the Micmacs using hollowed-out hemlock logs fitted with long wooden runners, he persuaded some men to attempt a treacherous thirty-two-kilometre voyage between Wood Island and Pictou, Nova Scotia. They succeeded, and this route would ultimately become the most dangerous of all iceboat routes in eastern Canada.

Over the decades, the iceboats of Prince Edward Island would slowly evolve from those models used by the Québécois on the St. Lawrence River. Rather than oversized canoes, later versions looked more like reinforced skiffs or dories. Most were about five metres long and 1.2 metres wide, with the bow curling up at the front like a giant ski. The sturdy oars were fitted with iron tips, and the frames were made from heavy oak with cedar planks on the interior. Most important, the iceboats had long runners attached to the bottom for scootering over the many types of ice that could be encountered on the strait.

As can be imagined, the highly specialized job of an iceboat captain came with an equal measure of specialized terminology. "Lolly" was a dreaded type of slush that was as thick as molasses, but not solid enough to walk on. It could take several hours just to row through half a kilometre of the stuff. "Bord" ice, on the other hand, was the solid ice usually encountered along the shorelines, and was quite easy to travel across. "Nilas," according to the Canadian Coast Guard dictionary definition, was a "thin, elastic crust ... thrusting in a pattern of interlocking fingers." Iceboat captains, of course, also had to know the difference between new ice and old ice, grey ice and glacier ice, brash ice and frazil ice, icebergs and bergy bits.* Worst of all were the huge icebergs that could crush a man against a boat's gunwales, or the massive pressure ridges that would rise from the sea like a wall. Normally these ridges were one and half to two metres high, but sometimes storms and tides could force them twelve metres out of the water.

The Calgary ice canoe team manoeuvres through an obstacle course of ice on the St. Lawrence River during the Quebec Winter Carnival.

In 1827 a new and safer winter route was proposed from Prince Edward Island to the mainland, a mere fourteen kilometres between Cape Traverse and Cape Tormen-

*Not all ice is created equal. New ice is composed of ice crystals only weakly frozen together. Old ice has survived at least one summer's melt. Grey ice is less than fif-

tine. Two entrepreneurs named Neil Campbell and Donald McInnis made the first crossing, and in 1829 the island government signed a deal with these men whereby all mail and passengers would thereafter travel the "Capes route." At their peak, iceboat captains were paid $75 a month, while an average crew member made roughly $45 a month. For such a dangerous occupation, the job didn't pay much. Indeed, the iceboat crew often encountered conditions that would shake the courage of even the most rugged outdoorsmen today.

Through the years there were many iceboat disasters, but one of the worst occurred on March 10, 1855, when four crew, three passengers, and a spaniel left Cape Tormentine for the Island. When they left the Cape at 8:00 A.M., the weather was clear, but by 5:00 P.M. the wind had stiffened enough to push them back towards the mainland faster than they could paddle and run with the boat. They were soon stuck in ice porridge while wet sleet gusted sideways into their eyes and against exposed skin. For two days they drifted on the pack ice, not able to reach either the island nor the mainland. Starving from two days without food, the crew finally killed the spaniel, ate its flesh raw, and drank its blood. They jettisoned all baggage except Her Majesty's mail. Eventually the crew managed to return to the mainland, sixty-four hours after leaving and forty kilometres east of where they had started. One of the passengers had frozen solid and the others, only by luck, managed to plow their way through massive snowdrifts for four hours until they reached a farm.

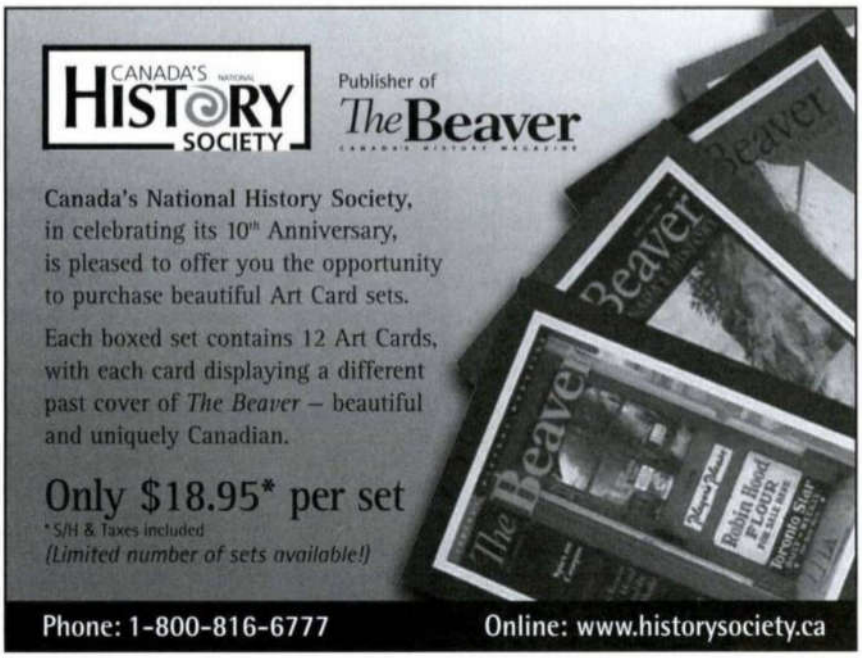
On another occasion a fleet of three iceboats set out for the Island with twenty-two passengers and crew. When a blizzard marooned them on the drifting pack ice they banked two boats together, crawled between them, and burned the third one. The fire, unfortunately, melted a hole in the ice, which meant they had to pull the boats apart, exposing their wet clothes to the raging storm. By the following day the fuel was gone and they had drifted some thirty-five kilometres off route. That's when they spotted a church steeple through the blowing snow and pushed hard for shore. They soon found themselves wading through neck-high snowdrifts in a swamp, and the weakest among them gave up to die in the snow. Everybody was eventually rescued, but one man had such bad frostbite that both feet and all his fingers had to be amputated. A second man was found in the swamp clinging to a frozen tree branch. The tree branch had to be chopped off and the man carried into a farmhouse still attached.

Consistent mail service to the island didn't start until 1873, when the Dominion of Canada lured P.E.I. into Confederation with the promise of daily mail deliveries. At the time, iceboats were still the primary means of delivering this service, although weather didn't always permit crossing. To solve the problem, the Canadian government invested in a long lineage of ferries, but more often than not ice would capture the ice-breaking vessels and drag them up and down the strait for days, or even weeks at a time.

For more than forty years after joining Canada, none of the ferries proved as dependable as these small iceboats. This finally changed in 1917 when the ninety-metre *Prince Edward Island* ferry was christened and proved capable of safe year-round passage. The final iceboat voyage crossed Northumberland Strait on April 28, 1917, and it was only then that this daring service and its courageous men passed happily into obsolescence.

teen centimetres thick and breaks on swell. Glacier ice is ice of land origin. Brash ice is the accumulation of floating ice fragments. Frazil ice consists of fragments of ice suspended in water. Usually spawned from disintegrating icebergs, bergy bits are less than five metres in size.

Matt Jackson is a Calgary-based photojournalist. His book about his four-year, coast-to-coast hitchhiking journey, *The Canada Chronicles*, is scheduled for publication in spring 2004.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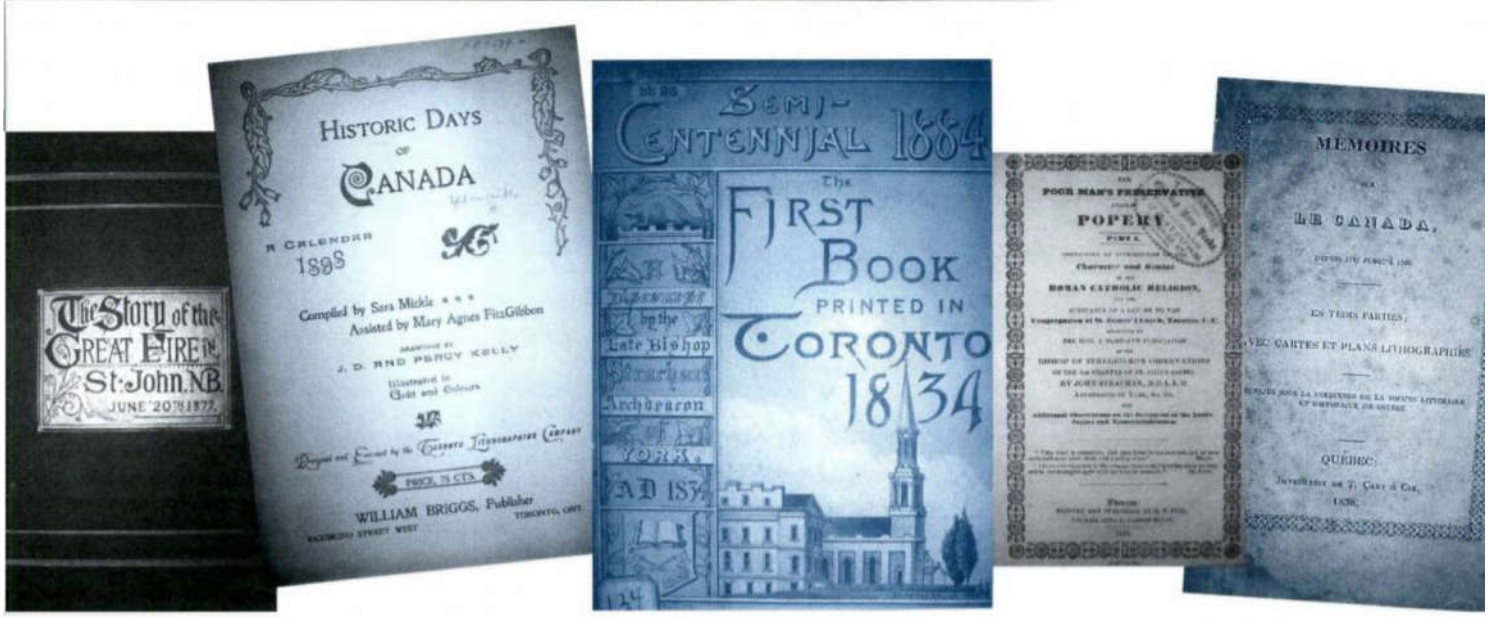
ET CETERA

The 2004 Quebec Winter Carnival has scheduled the annual ice-canoe race for Sunday, February 8 at 1:30 P.M. For more information visit the carnival's website at <www.carnaval.qc.ca>.



Left to right:
The Story of the Great Fire in St John, June 20, 1877 by George Stewart. Belford, Toronto, 1877. An eye-witness account of the fire that left the city's business district, most of its waterfront, and much of its residential area in ashes. Stewart was born in New York City and went to Canada in 1851, where he became a journalist.

Historic Days of Canada, A Calendar 1898 compiled by Sara Mickle, assisted by Mary Anne Fitzgibbon, drawings by J.D. and Percy Kelly. William Briggs, Toronto, 1897. The artwork for this calendar is by John David Kelly, who was born at Rice Lake in western Canada and received his art training at the Ontario School of Art in Toronto. After a year with the Grip Publishing Company, he joined the Stone Lithographic Company as a commercial artist and became famous for the Canadian scenes with which he illustrated the firm's calendars.

Semi-centennial cover for "the first book printed in Toronto, 1834." The cover was 1898. Inside is the original book.

The Poor Man's Preservative Against Popery. Part I: containing an introduction on the character and genius of the Roman Catholic Religion and the substance of a letter ... occasioned by ... John Elmsley's publication of the Bishop of Strasbourg's Observations on the 6th chapter of St. John's Gospel. G.P. Bull, Toronto, 1834.

Mémoires sur le Canada, depuis 1749 jusqu'à 1760 ... Publiés sous la direction de la Société littéraire et historique et historique de Québec. Publisher T. Cary & Cie, Quebec. This book recounts the final years of New France before its final capture by the British in 1759–1760. Special emphasis is given to the French military campaign in North America intended to save New France. It is published by the Société littéraire et historique de Québec – the first learned society of Quebec and dedicated to recovering the history of New France. A good part of that work was funded by the government of Lower Canada and is an early example showing Canadian government sponsorship of learning and the arts.

Bound for Britain

For some periods of Canadian publishing, only the British Library retains a copyright collection. Last spring, the Canadian High Commission in London began working to ensure those precious volumes are preserved.

by Doug Alexander

It's a tiny book with a long title – *Nehiro-iriniui aiamihe massinahigan* – and it is one of Canada's oldest published works.

Written by Jesuit missionary Jean Baptiste de la Brosse in Algonquin dialect and published in 1767, this palm-sized, leatherbound prayer book is one of the first books printed in Quebec – a century before Confederation. It is also one of tens of thousands of treasured Canadian books at the British Library in London, England, that mark an important chapter in Canada's publishing history.

"Outside Canada, and including most Canadian libraries, this is probably the best collection of Canadian material in the world," says Jim Egles, the library's Canadiana curator.

There are some great gems here: an 1806 edition of *Remarks on the culture and preparation of hemp in Canada* by Charles Taylor, which advocates a domestic rope-making industry, is a rare find; a 1781 edition of *A Primer for the use of Mohawk Children* is also noteworthy; a fragile-looking *First report on the state of the representation of the people of Upper Canada in the Legislature of that Province*, printed in 1831, bears the signature of William Lyon Mackenzie; and *Newfoundland Verse*, published in Toronto in 1923, is the first commercially published book by Edwin John Pratt.

"For Canadian history this is a very important collection because it covers all aspects of Canadian life," Egles says.

The earliest books of Canadian interest came to the British Museum Library – founded in 1753 and the prede-

All photos courtesy Doug Alexander.

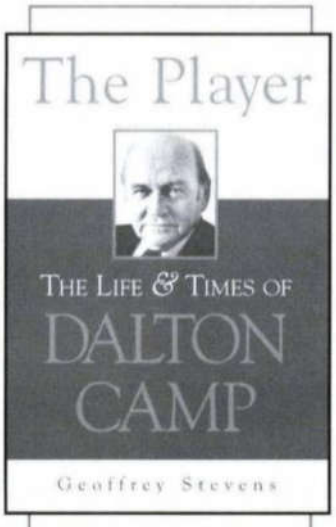
NATIONAL BESTSELLER

"...excellent..."
—*The Globe and Mail*

"...Stevens biography is **very strong... simply gripping...**"
—*National Post*

"...*The Player* **captures it all** and makes us realize why he is now, and always will be, so missed."
—Peter Mansbridge

"...**serious** and **beautifully written**
—Stevie Cameron



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cessor of today's British Library – as part of its foundation collections, which was established as publishing was dawning across the Atlantic.

Nothing was printed on Canadian soil before 1751, although plenty of ink had already been spilled in Europe about the New World. The British Library has one of three known copies of *Brief recit, & succincte narration, de la navaigation faicte es ysles de Canada* by French explorer Jacques Cartier, who reached Newfoundland, Labrador, and the St. Lawrence River in 1534. But this was published in Paris in 1545. It also possesses *Des Sauvages, ou, Voyage ... fait en la France nouvelle, l'an mil six cens trois* by Samuel de Champlain, whose account of his first voyage to Canada was also published in Paris, in 1603.

Nearly 150 years later Canada's first printing press arrived in Halifax, which was responsible for printing the first Canadian newspaper in March 1752. Publishers soon followed. Statutes and religion were the bestsellers of the day, so to speak, but as publishing spread to Upper Canada the variety grew – from political diatribes and grammar guides to pamphlets and poems.

Take for example *The Widow of the Rock and other Poems* written by "a Lady" (Margaret Blennerhassett) and published in Montreal in 1824. Or James K. Liston's *Niagara Falls: A Poem*, published in Toronto in 1843 – nine years after publisher G.P. Bull printed the city's first book, *The poor man's perspective against Popery* by John Strachan.

The library's copy of Strachan's historic manuscript has its original yellow paper front shielded by a hardcover added in 1884 to celebrate its semicentennial. This is one of scores of worn books earmarked for conservation and preservation funded by a $30,000 donation from the Canadian High Commission, through the library's Adopt-a-Book program.

The British Library also boasts eighteen thousand French Canadian titles, some dating to 1777 when publisher Fleury Mesplet was producing leatherbound religious books in Montreal.

A significant tome is Michel Bibaud's *Histoire du Canada sous la domination française*, which in 1837 was the first French book published in Canada describing French colonial rule. Another, a book by Georges-Barthélemi Faribault published in Quebec in 1837, represents the first catalogue of Canadiana ever published in North America – and in French, no less.

"These are very groundbreaking," says Des McTernan, who oversees the French Canadian collection. "You'd see both of these as milestones, landmarks in Canadian publishing history."

The British Museum Library acquisitions grew in the nineteenth century when they hired agent Henry Stevens to gather important North American material. Stevens, a self-confessed bibliographer and lover of books, scoured the continent for literary works to ship to Britain.

Other notable early Canadiana books arrived as part of the collection bequeathed by British statesman Thomas Grenville, who died in 1846.

But the biggest boon to the library's Canadian collection was due to copyright laws. The Imperial Copyright Act of 1842 and Canada's subsequent Copyright Amendment Act of 1895 required that a copy of every new Canadian publication be deposited at the British Museum – a requirement that remained until the legislation lapsed in 1924.*

The 1895 law included more than the written word, as photographic cu-

*A new Canadian copyright act was introduced in 1924, but it didn't require copyright deposit. Such conditions returned in 1931 under the Copyright Amendment Act, which required a copy of every book published in Canada to be deposited with the Library of Parliament. Copyright collections in Canada, meanwhile, have come under several jurisdictions. The minister of agriculture was made the copyright authority in Canada in 1868 and the copyright office remained with the Department of Agriculture for many years. After 1938, copyright materials under this administration went to the library of the Secretary of State, then to the Public Archives. As for the Library of Parliament's copyright holdings, they were transferred to the National Library after its establishment in 1953.

rator Annie Gilbert explains: "Because of the copyright act, we're in receipt of the most wonderful and in-depth, diverse collection of photographs that documents Canadian cultures."

The collection includes some five thousand black-and-white commercial photographs, including a thousand panoramas, dating between 1895 and 1924. Taken primarily by Canadians, these images focus on everything from prairie farms, portraits, and buildings, to sports photos, wildlife shots, and landscapes.

"The quality of the photographs was very good for the time because they were made by professional photographers and they had to be good enough to be published," Gilbert says. "They weren't family snapshots."

Although the 1895 act required photos to also be deposited at the Canadian copyright office in Ottawa, the British cache developed into an insurance policy of sorts for those images that have disappeared or been destroyed. Between the British Library and the Library and Archives of Canada, today's guardian of the surviving photos, a full set likely survives today.

McTernan says: "The library has been enriched because of Britain's imperial past and because it had a government that passed various legislation – copyright acts – so this information would be recognized."

Consequently, one of the most engaging collections of early Canadiana has helped generations of researchers explore Canadian history.

"It was a bit like the Internet of its time," McTernan adds. "All knowledge was here." 🅼

Doug Alexander is a Canadian writer who spent four years working as a journalist in Britain.

ET CETERA

To learn more about the British Library and its acquisitions go to the library's website at <www.bl.uk>.

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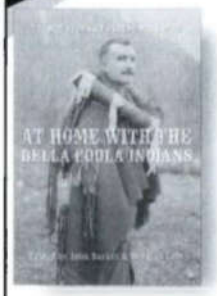

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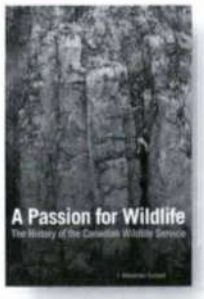

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RIEL REFLECTIONS

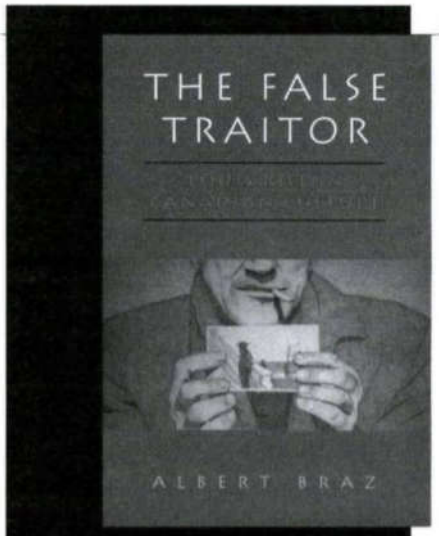
The False Traitor is primarily a study of literary representations of Louis Riel read against Riel's own writings. Author Albert Braz concludes that these representations "are important not so much because of what they tell us about Riel but because of what they reveal about Euro-Canada, the dominant sector of Canadian society that for over a century has been able to create essentially the Riel it wishes – or needs – to see." While Braz concentrates on novels, drama (including opera and film), and poetry, he also discusses historians from George Stanley to J.M. Bumsted, political cartoonists such as Riel's contemporary, liberal J.W. Bengough, and the Regina and Winnipeg sculptures of Riel.

Braz is most fascinated by the evolution of Riel from traitor to Canadian hero – including the way both the West and Quebec have each and oppositely claimed Riel as a hero/martyr who represents either region and its victimization at the hands of Ottawa and either Central Canada or anglophone Protestants. The appropriation of Riel as either a regional or all-Canadian figure, he points out, requires ignoring both the specificity of Métis political and cultural claims and the decided idiosyncrasy of Riel's brand of Catholicism. Furthermore, the most enthusiastic proponents of the all-Canadian Riel since the 1940s are Anglo-Canadians who are logically the cultural descendants not of Riel but of the Ontario volunteers who opposed him at both Red River and Batoche. Quebec proponents of Riel see him as a victim of religious prejudice – but, according to Braz, do not acknowledge Quebec's own history of racism toward Métis and First Nations peoples. The Métis writers Braz surveys either prefer Gabriel Dumont's pragmatism or, Braz says, grant Riel a titular but not terribly important position in their pantheon of national identity.

A rich source of information about both well-known and obscure Riel representations, with a logical organization and clear, jargon-free discussion, this book has, perhaps, two shortcomings. Braz is clear about the inherent difficulty in using Riel, who fought for the rights of a small minority group against the dominant Euro-Canadian society, as a symbol of the very society he opposed. Yet he seems bemused by, rather than sympathetic to, texts by writers such as Margaret Laurence, Adele Wiseman, and Rex Deverell that deal openly with this paradox. Seeing Riel as a hero does not mean seeing the Ontario volunteers as traitors or villains, though it does mean wishing, as did contemporaries like Bengough, that Macdonald had chosen a strategy of incorporating the West into Confederation that allowed for cultural variation and followed the promises in the numbered treaties and other documents that the government itself had negotiated.

More important, given Braz's insistence that Riel's significance must be measured in terms of outcomes for the Métis people and his recognition that First Nations peoples do not generally claim Riel as a hero, is some context of the actual political and economic gains and losses following each of Riel's interventions in history. Manitoba did become a province and did evade (with Riel's help) considerable annexationist pressure from the U.S., but the Métis never received the block settlements their envoy to Ottawa, Father Ritchot, believed they had been promised. The actual land allotments and Métis scrip were more useful to settlers and to speculators than to Métis families, who in only a generation would become a relatively powerless minority in Manitoba.

Similarly, in Saskatchewan, although some Métis received their land titles, many later became, as Maria Campbell would describe them, the Road Allowance People. As for the Crees, as Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser point out, Riel's actions completely derailed their careful plans to organize for treaty rights and famine relief after the starving winter of 1883–84. Riel's appeals for Indian uprisings and the few private settlings of scores at places like Frog Lake resulted in more hangings and harsher imprisonment for Crees and Assiniboines than anything that happened to the Métis.



The False Traitor:
Louis Riel in Canadian Culture
By Albert Braz
University of Toronto Press,
Toronto, 2003
272 pp., illus., $55.00 hardcover,
$24.95 paper

The clear gainers from the North-West Rebellion were John A. Macdonald, who won his railway and an excuse to abrogate treaty rights and to impose new restrictions and cost-cutting measures on the Crees and the incoming Euro-descended settlers. It is not surprising, then, that while Riel remains a popular bogey man in the rural West, he is also a safe hero for Anglo-Canadian artists – like Rex Deverell's fictional playwright Matt, who, when faced with the complexities of a contemporary person of Métis descent, finally has to acknowledge that he is the heir of Macdonald, no matter how much he wants to claim Riel. Nor is it surprising that Adele Wiseman, the daughter of Ashkenazic emigrants to Winnipeg, would desire to imagine a past that might have had room for Métis and Cree communities that might have existed in parallel with an individualistic, market-driven anglophone culture. Riel's ultramontane leanings and his idiosyncrasy seem to place him far away from Wiseman's ideal, and yet ...

Reviewed by **Frances W. Kaye**, who teaches Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and occasionally at the University of Calgary. Her most recent book is *Hiding the Audience: Viewing Arts and Arts Institution on the Prairies* (University of Alberta Press, 2003).

A Toxic Cocktail

Stephen Kimber's *Sailors, Slackers and Blind Pigs* is an engaging account of Halifax during the Second World War. Kimber, director of the school of journalism at King's College University in Halifax, recounts both the highs and lows of this period, when Halifax was a strategic port in the Allied war effort.

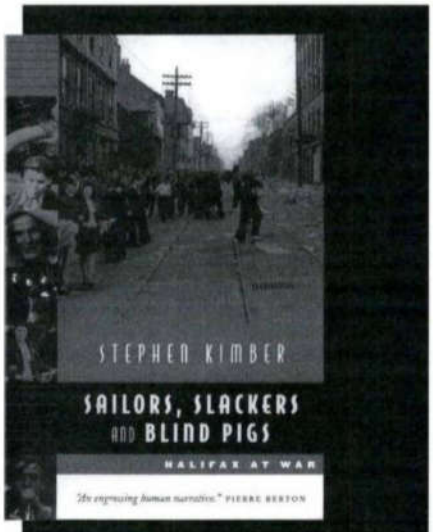
Sailors, Slackers and Blind Pigs weaves its account around the first-hand recollections of a small group who lived through the city's war years, including a female welder, a young evacuee from Britain, a Montrealer looking for romance, a navy captain, a newspaper reporter, and a handful of other characters. The book also features sailors, slackers (civilians), and clients who patronized the city's blind pigs, or illegal drinking establishments. Years of overcrowding, lack of adequate housing, high prices, shortages, increased crime, lineups for everything, boredom, frustration, and drunken jubilation at the final victory in Europe all combined to make a toxic cocktail in May 1945, when riots broke out in downtown Halifax. Mindless violence gripped the city for two days as thousands of sailors and civilians ran amok. The rampage caused at least a million dollars worth of damage and three deaths. The city took years to recover.

One of the more tragic figures in the book is Rear Admiral Leonard Murray, a Nova Scotia native and workaholic who was the only Canadian ever to have complete command over an entire theatre of war. Murray was responsible for convoy escort services in the northwest Atlantic Ocean and surrounding waters, a deadly feeding ground for Nazi U-boats. While the submarine menace was successfully turned back, Murray failed to take decisive control when VE Day celebrations turned ugly and riots broke out. His confrontational personality and lack of resolve during the rioting proved a convenient scapegoat for the investigating authorities. Blame was placed on him, ending his thirty-four year navy career. He left Canada after the war and become an English barrister, although he always considered himself Canadian.

Sailors, Slackers and Blind Pigs is written in a series of short vignettes, which is not surprising given Kimber's journalist background. But one of the downsides of this approach is the absence of endnotes, which Kimber specifically omitted. This is an unfortunate decision, as the book contains many little-known facts that warrant referencing. For example, it would be fascinating to have a complete listing of the author's sources for the suspicious murder-suicide of a Royal Navy paymaster and his daughter, who lived in Halifax during the war, and for the two potential ammunition explosions in the harbour, each of which would have been as devastating as the Halifax Explosion of 1917. One event Kimber neglects to mention when describing the sinking of the British armed merchant cruiser *Jervis Bay* that sailed from Halifax in a 1940 convoy was the additional loss of the Canadian Pacific freighter *Beaverford*. Both ships were part of convoy HX84 destined for Liverpool, and both were attacked by the German pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer*, resulting in a heavy loss of life. Fogarty Fegan, the *Jervis Bay* captain, was killed in action and posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. The entire crew of the *Beaverford* perished, and its place in history was relegated to oblivion.

Sailors, Slackers and Blind Pigs includes a modest selection of period photographs, but it would have benefitted from additional contributions, including perhaps present-day pictures of those individuals reappearing throughout the book who are so much a part of it. A two-page map of Halifax is also featured but too small to be readable.

Halifax-born Kimber presents a unique insight into the city's life during the war. Halifax played a vital role in the victory in Europe, and what should have been a celebration became a sad episode of arson, drunkenness, and looting. *Sailors, Slackers and Blind Pigs* illustrates that the turmoil of war was not only overseas. It also washed up on the shores of eastern Canada, and Kimber's narrative provides a sensitive and long overdue assessment of the war's repercussions on the Canadian home front.



Sailors, Slackers and Blind Pigs: Halifax at War
by Stephen Kimber
Doubleday Canada, Toronto, 2002
342 pp., $34.95 hardcover

Reviewed by Ottawa lawyer **Gavin Murphy** who lived in Halifax during the 1950s.

New Take on Drake

Having read newspaper references three years ago to the research on which *The Secret Voyage of Sir Francis Drake 1577–1580* is based, I opened it with a skeptical eye. The author is a

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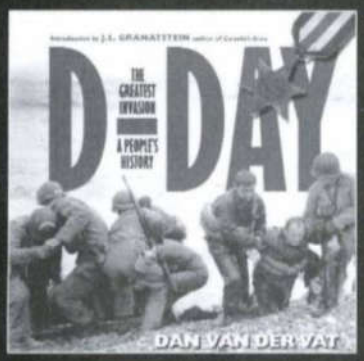

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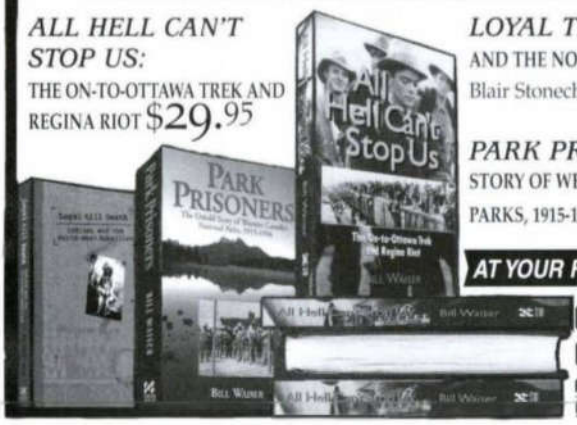

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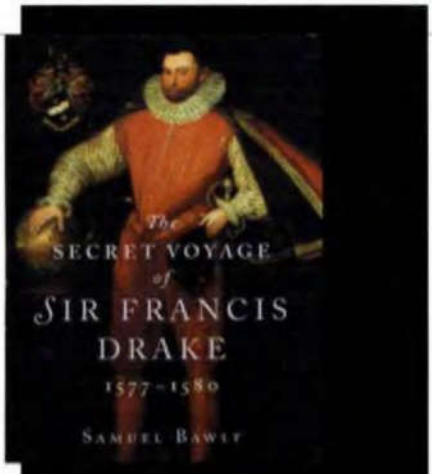
British Columbian, a former provincial minister; his aim is to link British Columbia with the greatest voyage of the greatest figure in English maritime history. A reviewer is alert, therefore, for the sort of local wishful thinking with which a Norwegian writer once claimed Columbus as a compatriot. My skepticism, not dispelled by the bold claims of the prologue, survived through the unstartling chapters of background and early biography, but I read the chapters on the course of the voyage with increasing interest, which ended in fascination and rueful delight. It is one of those works that make historians shake their head and say, "Damn, why didn't I do that?" It largely solves the most significant puzzle concerning Drake's voyages, and does so with convincing evidence, skillfully marshalled. The evidence was always there, but nobody noticed it. One feels like Dr. Watson having a solution explained to him by Sherlock Holmes.

The aims of the voyage, which is usually called "the circumnavigation," were deliberately confused in the preparation, with the aim of concealing them from Spain's Philip II, but it has long been evident that sailing around the world was not the primary intention. Compared with the spoils seized in Drake's depredations off South and Central America, the voyage from then onwards brought little profit, and Elizabeth would have been better pleased if he had been able to return home by an altogether different route. Raid Philip's shipping and challenge Spanish dominance of the Pacific, certainly; but the underlying aim of the voyage was to explore the west coast of the Americas northward to find the western entrance to the longed-for Northwest Passage, which would open a way to the Orient and enable the establishment of English colonies in the west of North America. In the upshot, having to sail around the rest of the world must have been a deep disappointment to Drake.

Contemporary accounts are contradictory on the latitude Drake reached and unconvincing on climatic detail. None mentions finding an apparent opening to a Northwest Pas-



The Secret Voyage of Sir Francis Drake 1577–1580
by Samuel Bawlf
Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver, 2003
400 pp., illus., $37.95 hardcover

sage. Scholars have backed off from the question, while noting the likelihood of censorship by Elizabeth of material that would reveal the extent of the exploration to the Spanish and accepting a bay near San Francisco as the likely site of Drake's longest stay ashore. Bawlf's startling contribution has been to pore over the maps produced, mostly by the Dutch, after the voyage. His conclusions appear irrefutable: Drake never approached California. After leaving Mexico he sailed west, then northeast, made a landfall on Vancouver Island, sailed on north to Alaskan waters, explored the straits between Prince Edward, Queen Charlotte, and Vancouver Islands and the mainland, sailed out of the Juan de Fuca Strait, and landed to rest his men and clean his ships on the coast of Oregon.

The major puzzle is solved: Drake went as far as 57 degrees north, to the latitude of the penetrating cold and awesome, snow-covered mountains described by his companions. Smaller puzzles, too, find a plausible solution. What became of the small Spanish prize vessel that Drake had retained? Why was the crew of the *Golden Hinde* reduced in the Pacific crossing? Bawlf suggests that some were left to man the pinnace and the prize, which then set off to pursue a course home via the Northwest Passage that Drake thought he had found (the *Hinde* being larger and less manoeuvrable). This is speculation, as are the details of the course through the straits, and there is a good deal of "it is likely" and "quite possibly" in the earlier chapters. With this refreshing book, however, Drake scholarship has taken a great stride forward. None of the many maps examined by Bawlf would alone justify his conclusions, but taken together and set against the details of the contemporary accounts, with allowance made for an apparently consistent alteration of latitude figures because of censorship, the evidence is highly convincing.

Reviewed by **John Cummins**, Honorary Research Fellow in Spanish in the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, and author of *Francis Drake: the Lives of a Hero*.

FLYING AS METAPHOR

"As long as humans have walked the earth, they have probably longed to rise above it," states author Jonathan F. Vance in *High Flight: Aviation and the Canadian Imagination*.

Although he's not a fan of flying, his purpose is to acquaint readers with the impact flying has had on the Canadian psyche, evidenced through myriad aviation-related stories by writers across the land.

The literary examples he has unearthed range from purple prose to eloquent novels, poems, letters, editorials, articles, and radio broadcasts – all interesting and insightful, and some sweet and funny, such as a Prince Edward Island honeymooner's hope of an aviation adventure for him and his bride:

> Close to the moon we'll spoon,
> spoon, spoon,
> As we roam the Milky Way
> In our aerodrome, 'neath the
> heaven's dome,
> 10,000 miles a day.

The author first notes "the use of the balloon as a metaphor for the impossible [being] supplanted by the notion that it was a harbinger of a new

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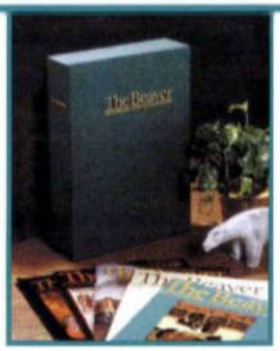

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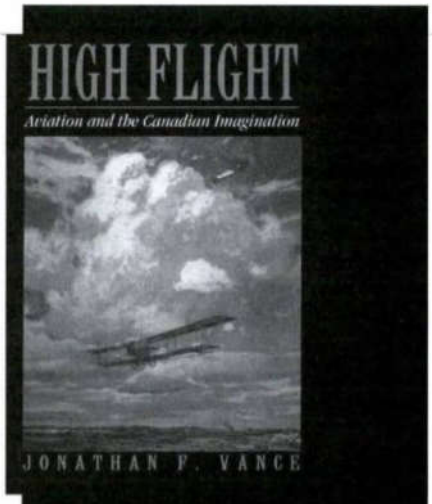
age." Indeed it was. Early aviation stories lionized adventurers such as Lindbergh and breathlessly described pioneering trips and entertainment stunts. In fact, such aeronautical marvels were proving "everything but to demonstrate that a flying machine could have practical value."

The advent of World War I changed that, when air force recruits received training and were sent off to use aircraft as the most modern way to win. Poets again jumped to the fore, creating verses that moved readers at home to tears, and fears:

> The great guns swing to the call and beck
> Of the men who traverse the upper air,
> And that soaring speck is the great guns' eyes ...
> Death's controlled by a man-made bird,
> And a bird-like man, o'er the German line.
>
> (Jack Turner, "The Aeroplane")



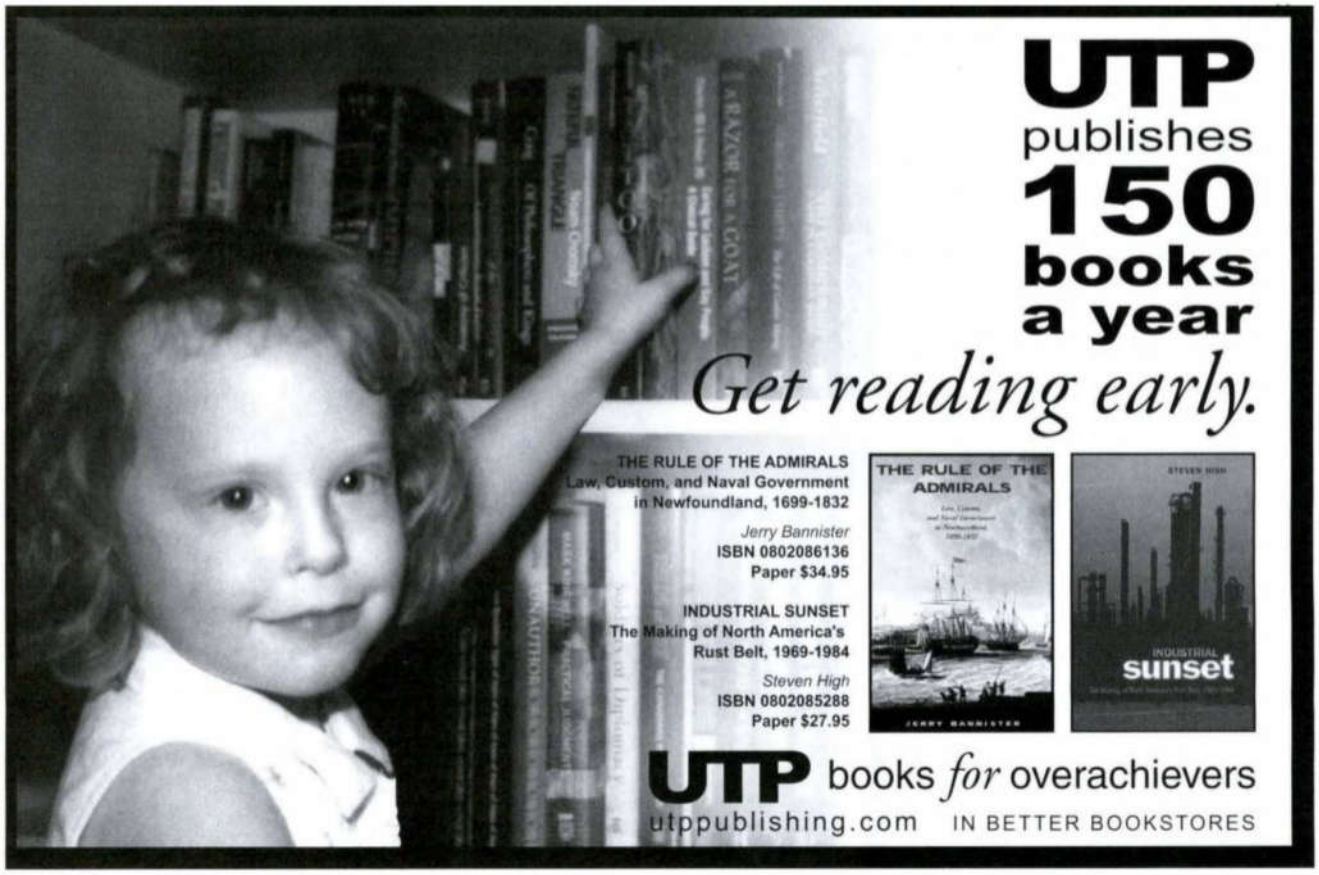
High Flight: Aviation and the Canadian Imagination
by Jonathan F. Vance
Penguin Canada, Toronto, 2002
352 pp., $35.00 hardcover

When suddenly unemployed airmen returned home following the war they took to barnstorming – stunt flying at fairs and exhibitions – thus bringing the planes to the people. The thrill caught, and the "airborne flivvers" became increasingly popular.

Politics soon followed. The Air Board Act was passed in 1919, and the Trans-Canada Airway was established with airfields built across Canada in the 1930s. Rules and regulations now covered everything from licensing and regulating private pilots and flying clubs to airline companies, as well as the routes and aircraft they flew. "Air-Regs" became the mantra of governments, and in many cases the dirge of owners and fliers. Caution was necessary – the crash of the R-101 dirigible in October 1930 underlined the conviction.

With development, flying soon became a trendy – and safe – system of travel. "We should now think of Canada as not 3,500 miles wide but as 18 to 24 hours in width," stated Winnipeg South Centre MP W.W. Kennedy to the House of Commons in 1934.

The many victories, but also the casualties, resulting from aviation involvement in World War II hit home. "The airplane, so recently seen as the pinnacle of human achievement, was evolving into a sinister killing machine



capable of spreading destruction," the author notes. "The sound of an airplane engine had once sent people dashing outside to catch a glimpse of the aerial wonder; now it was as likely to send them scurrying for shelter."

High Flight is well-developed and researched, complete with thirty-two pages of footnotes, plus seven pages of "readings." Most interesting are excerpts and quotes that reveal writers' views on the impact of the airplane. Notable are romanticized verses and novels based on hero worship – mainly glorifying pilots – and children's book series based on aviation adventures. The well-known and loved poem "High Flight," after which this book is named (written by nineteen-year-old Spitfire pilot John Gillespie Magee) well illustrates that combination of romance and tragedy often experienced when humans slip "the surly bonds of earth." ◘

Reviewed by **Shirlee Smith Matheson**, a Calgary writer and author of the series *Flying the Frontiers*.

MORE BOOKS

The Group of Seven and Tom Thomson. By David P. Silcox

If you want to evince both your passionate Canadian nationalism and your exquisite taste this holiday season, you could do worse than place this tome on your coffee table. It hardly seems anything new could be said about the Group of Seven, the painters who in the early part of the twentieth century revolutionized the nation's visual sense of itself, but Sotheby's Canada managing director David Silcox manages to find something fresh. More importantly, he has scoured private collections to find works that have never been reproduced before. Hence a third of the images in the book are new to most eyes. And the quality of the reproductions is superb. The artwork is organized regionally, moving east to west, and includes, in addition to the landscapes for which the group is famous, sections on the war years and still life. Could there be a more beautiful collection of Group of Seven works around currently? Not likely.

Firefly Books, Toronto, 2003. 441 pp., $85.00 hardcover

Canada–opoly.

This is not a book. It's a board game modelled on Parker Brothers' famous original *Monopoly*, and at least half the fun is noting the substitutions. The CN Tower and Château Frontenac replace Boardwalk and Park Place as the most valuable pieces of real estate. Players no longer "go to jail"; they "slide to snowstorm." Houses and hotels are now cabins and ski chalets. Tokens include a hockey stick and a beaver. And so on. Educationally speaking, *Canada-opoly* isn't completely frivolous. You never learn a thing about Atlantic City's Baltic Avenue in *Monopoly*, but you do learn something about Canada's provinces, bodies of water, historic sites, and national parks from the backs of the deeds in *Canada-opoly*. In summary – fun for the whole family with a little Canadian earnestness thrown in.

Outset Media, Victoria, 2003. $36.99.

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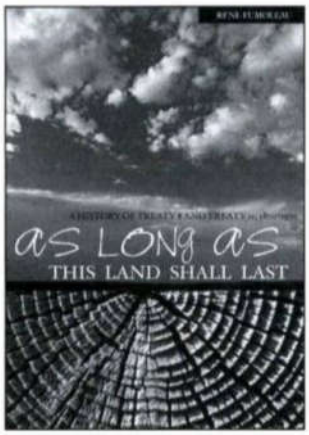

AS LONG AS THIS LAND SHALL LAST
A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939

By René Fumoleau
Afterword by Joanne Barnaby

ISBN 1-55238-063-7 / 415pp.
29 B&W Photos+Maps / $24.95

As Long As This Land Shall Last is an historically accurate and complete document of Treaties 8 and 11 between the Canadian government and the Native people that ensured they could live and hunt in the Northwest Territories – "as long as the sun rises, as long as the river flows, as long as this land shall last."

Historian René Fumoleau has delved into church and government sources to give the reader a clear picture of the negotiations for the treaties beginning in 1870 up to their aftermath in 1939.

This edition includes an afterword by Joanne Barnaby, former Executive Director of the Dene Cultural Institute, that outline the significant political and cultural developments since the signing of these treaties. She examines these developments with a fascinating discussion that will have lasting implications for future generations of Dene people.

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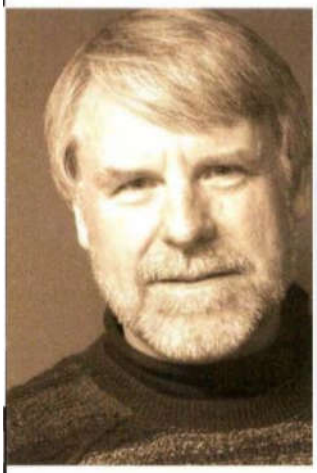
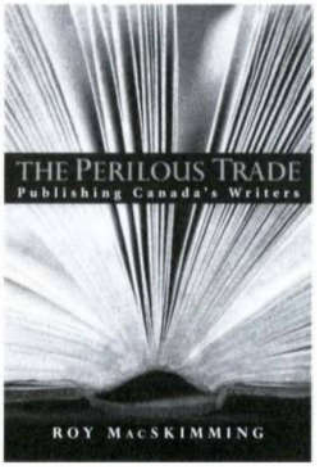
Christopher Moore

Roy MacSkimming: Where Canadian Publishing Came From

"I think there is nothing really comparable in any other country of our size," says Roy MacSkimming. He's talking about Canadian publishing, and the way that, these days, the best-selling, prize-winning, buzz-launching international literary hit is often a book written by a Canadian. (Indeed, it's often a historical novel.) Where did that come from? Only a generation ago, Canadian writing and publishing did not expect to be taken seriously even at home.

MacSkimming thinks the change is a great Canadian achievement. Still, creating a cultural revolution hasn't been easy. He calls his new book on Canadian publishing in the last fifty years *The Perilous Trade*.





For MacSkimming, this is personal history. In 1964, a writer in embryo, he started hauling books around a basement warehouse for Clarke Irwin. He's been in the trade ever since: as editor, publisher, Canada Council official, lobbyist, and writer too. "I wanted to capture some of a history that I have lived through, before it is forgotten," he told me recently.

To write *The Perilous Trade*, MacSkimming went out interviewing the makers of Canadian publishing. Exploring an industry by following its people and their careers, he has given us a history driven by an engaging narrative and a cast of remarkable characters.

Starting with ancient times (the early 1960s), he evokes the tea-and-biscuits gentility of publishing, the cross-country train odysseys of hard-drinking book reps, and the cozy situation of textbook publishers when provincial ministries would order schoolbook titles by the tens of thousands at a time.

Those are all vanished worlds. MacSkimming's real subject is the emergence, mostly in the later 1960s, of publishers with a new faith that had three elements. First, that there were writers in Canada. Second, that there were readers eager to read their own country's stories. Third, that publishing the former for the latter was a vocation worth committing life and fortune to.

The first prophet of that faith was Jack McClelland of McClelland and Stewart. The "prince of publishers," the "real prime minister of Canada," McClelland committed his firm to Canadian books for Canadian audiences in the 1950s. By the centennial year, 1967, his firm dominated the Canadian publishing scene in happy alliance with writers like Pierre Berton, Margaret Laurence, and Farley Mowat.

McClelland, however, was one of a kind, and one was too few. The real revolution, MacSkimming argues, came with the "underground" publishers of the late 1960s. These were mostly poets, story writers, and polemicists; they decided if they did not start their own publishing houses, they and the people they wanted to read would never be published at all. MacSkimming, a youthful founder of a publisher called New Press in 1968, was part of it. "For a generation they made it possible to think of oneself as a writer in this country and to be published and to reach an audience."

Technology helped make the underground possible: "We were at the start of computer typesetting, so printing was cheap," MacSkimming recalls. (So were rents in Toronto then). "And we had cheap paper and lousy covers, but we got the work out there, and people responded. We found the audience ... . That underground generation really was crucial for unleashing lots of writers," including several of today's international literary superstars. "Suddenly, a whole generation of writers was stimulated by knowing that they could get their stuff published and out to the public."

Those underground houses were often Toronto-centred and countercultural. "Printed in Canada by mindless acid freaks," read a Coach House logo. But MacSkimming also recalls pioneers like the middle-aged ex-military officer Gray Campbell of Sidney, B.C. Campbell grasped in the 1960s that British Columbians wanted books about British Columbia. His company, Gray's Publishing, successfully published local books that local readers bought and read, inspiring other regional publishers. In Montreal, May Cutler, sometime mayor of Westmount, decided the ABCs Canadian parents read their kids should have some Canadian images in them. Insisting on good writing, topnotch illustrating, and full-colour printing, she helped

initiate a tidal wave of terrific Canadian children's books.

For all these successes – which have now inspired many foreign-owned publishers to compete for a share of Canadian literary publishing – this trade truly is perilous. Canadian publishing is a never-ending story of spectacular collapses and deathbed rescues. MacSkimming's last chapters are dominated by the failure of Stoddart Books and General Distributing in 2002. This year, his own intended publisher went out of business the very day he completed his manuscript.

MacSkimming is good on the maddening economics faced by Canadian publishers, obliged to deliver local titles to a small market where high international standards and low international pricing will always rule. But having struggled for many years to influence cultural policy in Ottawa and elsewhere, he's even better on the politics of Canadian culture.

"It could not have been done without people who wanted these voices to be heard. Publishers evolved to give voice to them. But we actually used public policy to achieve something. It needs some public support." He demonstrates that we have a Canadian writing and publishing industry (and a Canadian music industry too, but a film industry not so much) because as a society we wanted it, and took steps to ensure that it existed.

The trade may be perilous, but MacSkimming must believe it has a future. He has recently abandoned Ottawa lobbying for a home in Perth, Ontario, to work on his first novel in many years, to be set in the nineteenth century.

Meanwhile, he's told an important story of recent Canadian history. "My motivation was to record what truly is a national success story. We have spawned an industry that gives voice to the disparate voices of civil society, of our whole mosaic. This is such a diverse country, and now we have book publishers for all these publics." ⚜

Roy MacSkimming's *The Perilous Trade: Publishing Canada's Writers* was published by McClelland and Stewart in September 2003.

Carpenter WILLIAM SHANKS GLADSTONE was a keen observer of the Alberta frontier. But, says novelist Fred Stenson, he had a different take on history than his presumed betters.

"If what you have read in history books is true, and what people told me is less true, then history is the only kind of water that gets cleaner the farther you go downstream." These are words ascribed to William Gladstone in my novel *The Trade*, about Canada's nineteenth-century fur trade. Gladstone is not the novel's hero, nor even a character. His role is to comment on history itself, and he does so in seven short fictional letters to the *Rocky Mountain Echo*, a newspaper in Pincher Creek, Alberta, that did indeed publish the real Gladstone's memoirs in 1903 and 1904. I'd like to explain why William Gladstone, a frontier carpenter, seemed like the exact right person to be history's judge.

In 1848, William Shanks Gladstone left Quebec to begin service with the Hudson's Bay Company. He was sixteen, and the true nature of his employment might have dawned on him the night armed guards watched to ensure he did not desert.

From Fort Edmonton, Gladstone rode a horse that "looked like a box of cutlery" to Rocky Mountain House. When an ox put a horn through his horse and set him afoot, he had "the biggest cry of [his] life." At Rocky, an Orkneyman taught him to build York boats. That was how William Gladstone became a carpenter, a career in which he would prove the saying that if you can build a boat, you can build anything.

Gladstone served the HBC for fourteen years. Each time his contract ended, he saw no alternative and signed on again. It helped that the officers brought the contract and pen when the men were drunk at New Year's, which happened to be Gladstone's birthday. In 1856, Gladstone married Harriet LeBlanc, a Métis woman of Fort Edmonton. Thinking he should be more independent now, he went to Red River to farm. But, lonely for home, the Gladstones soon returned to Edmonton and the HBC.

It was 1862 when Gladstone finally made his break. Immediately, he was hired by a Methodist missionary to build a house at the Smokey Lake mission. Two years later, news of gold strikes in Montana gave him "a bad case of gold fever." He was already familiar with prospectors, having almost been

I discovered ... that he was the only worker of his time to leave an account of fur trade life. I saw how his "facts" did not match the officer-class facts, how his opinion of men often reversed theirs.

killed by one. Mr. Clover, of the Clover Bar gold strike near Edmonton, pulled a gun on him during a dispute. Harriet struck the gun out of the miner's hand with an axe.

At Fort Benton, Gladstone found a town growing fast on miners' gold. Rather than prospect, he opened a carpenter's shop. After building the first I.G. Baker store in Benton, Gladstone returned to Canada and built Fort Whoop-Up, the infamous whisky fort. He worked there for four years. When the Mounties came west to stop the whisky trade, Gladstone moved to Fort Macleod and helped build the associated town.

When the open-range ranch era got rolling in the 1880s, Old Glad worked his last frontier. He built houses for well-heeled ranchers. In this capacity, he appears in another novel of mine called *Lightning*. In 1911, at Mountain Mill at the mouth of valley that would in time wear his name, William Gladstone died.

What first intrigued me about William Gladstone was that he had finished his life not far from where I had begun my own. One of his descendants, James Riviere, used to buy hay from my father. Then, while researching *The Trade*, I discovered his greater fame: that he was the only worker of his time to leave an account of fur trade life. I saw how his "facts" did not match the officer-class facts, how his opinion of men often reversed theirs. To try and tell the history in William Gladstone's upside-down way became my goal.

What would I ask him if I could meet him today? I would ask why his *Rocky Mountain Echo* memoir stopped on January 26, 1904. Was he sick or tired, or is it true that some friends asked him to stop before he got to the whisky trade part and landed them all in jail? I would ask him which of his many frontiers he liked best.

Fred Stenson is a Calgary writer. His novel, *The Trade*, was nominated for the Giller Prize; his latest work, *Lightning*, deals with the beginning of the Canadian ranch industry. The writings of William Gladstone, *The Gladstone Diaries*, is a publication of the Historic Trails Society of Alberta.

THE BIG BANG

Where were you at 9:00 a.m. April 5, 1958? If you were watching television, no doubt you were watching the first live coast-to-coast broadcast of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The occasion was the demolition of Ripple Rock – the biggest nonnuclear explosion ever deliberately set off and the focus of worldwide interest.

Those of you who have had the pleasure of taking a cruise on the *Love Boat* or other excursion craft to Alaska have no doubt traversed the Seymour Narrows along the inner passage up the Pacific Coast north from Vancouver. Since 9:31 A.M. on April 5, 1958, it has been no big deal, and even such large boats as the *Island Princess* have no difficulty transiting the narrows at all stages of the tide. I took the trip to Alaska several years ago and had the pleasure of being on the bridge when we went over the remains of Ripple Rock. I was disappointed that the captain had never heard of the big bang.

Up until 1958 this navigation hazard just north of Campbell River had been the nemesis of many ships. No one knows precisely how many ships or people have been lost, but since 1875 five large ships were sunk and nineteen more have been damaged. In addition to the large vessels, more than one hundred fishing boats, tugs, and yachts have gone to the bottom, and 114 lives lost. The first recorded casualty was the *Saranac*, a 2,150-ton United States naval vessel. One of the last victims was the *William J. Stewart*, which was severely damaged in 1944.

Between 1921 and 1941 many demands were made for removing the hazard of Ripple Rock, twin peaks of rock that jut from the floor of Seymour Narrows, and a number of studies were made to determine the feasibility. With the entry of the United States into World War II and the possibility of submarine attacks on American supply routes to Alaska, pressure increased to improve the inner navigation route.

In 1942 and 1945, attempts were made to remove Ripple Rock by drilling from stationary floating scows and loading the holes with explosives – the traditional method of removing solid material from channels. But the strong currents and turbulent water in Seymour Narrows made the task near impossible. In 1953, a new study suggested attacking the problem from below the surface of the water rather than from above: construct a 760-metre tunnel from adjacent Maude Island under the narrows, then two ninety-metre shafts up into the pinnacles of the submerged mountain; load the shafts with explosives, and blow the lid off. That was the effective answer. The project – the largest ever undertaken by the Department of Public Works, of which I was a part – started in October 1955 with no fanfare and was completed with a big bang on April 5, 1958.

It sounds very simple, although many innovative mining techniques were used. However, the successful conclusion of the project had some other interesting aspects. For instance, the blast occurred during the International Geophysical Year and the large explosion offered scientists an opportunity to investigate various physical characteristics of the Earth. By measuring the seismic waves, geophysicists were able to determine, among other things, that the Earth's crust under the Rocky Mountains and the Selkirk range is twenty kilometres thicker than under the Canadian Shield. American, English, as well as Canadian agencies studying nuclear explosions were also observers, and carried out close-in, seismic, and air-blast measurements. Their instruments placed in the tunnels and peaks were still operating an hour after the explosion. Elsewhere, the Department of Fisheries and the Fisheries Research Board of Canada surveyed the area for surface kills immediately after the blast and studied the effects on fish placed in cages at various distances from the centre of the blast site.

The size of the explosion created some administrative headaches. The

explosive manufacturers didn't want to be held responsible for any unwelcome results, the contractors refused to set off the blast, and so the federal government had to authorize the removal of Ripple Rock's pinnacle and assume responsibility through a special order-in-council. This raised the question of who would press the button. Since the button was to be located in an bunker on Quadra Island inaccessible to press or TV, a distinguished public personage was ruled out; the consulting engineer to the ministry of public works was given the job.

I said that the blast was set off at 9:31 A.M. on April 5, 1958. Why not, for instance, at noon on May 1? Because timing was very important. We wanted to avoid periods when there were no major fish runs through the area. We needed extreme high tide so the water would lessen the rock fragments entering the air space above. And we needed to ensure the best time for a live, coast-to-coast television broadcast. The weather conditions were also crucial – a heavy cloud cover could have led to the air compression wave being reflected downward with unforeseen results and explosion-related gases being concentrated.

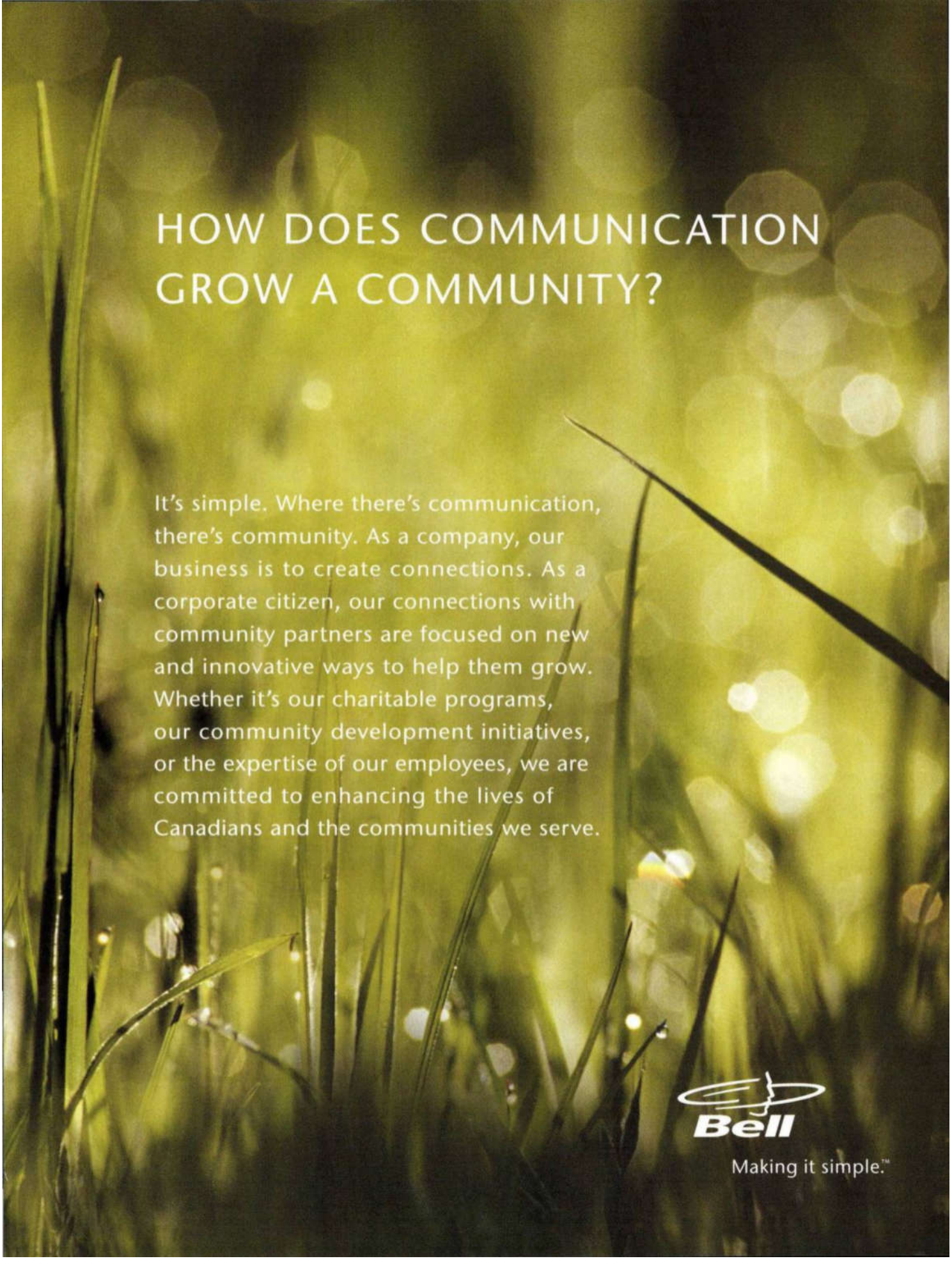
If any of you have lived in a neighborhood where sewer, waterline, or road construction requiring blasting, you will be aware of the effect that the explosion has on your house. With 1.25 million kilograms of explosives needed for Ripple Rock, the potential risk of damage was considerable. Twenty-eight adults, twenty-two children, and their pets living within a five-kilometre radius of the blast were evacuated by the RCMP the day before the event. Signs were posted warning people to stay out of the area. Roadblocks were set up on all roads. Marine patrol kept all craft away. Air service controllers in Vancouver were told to keep aircraft clear. To forestall speculative insurance claims, the Underwriters Adjustment Bureau surveyed all buildings within a wide area of Seymour Narrows both before and after the explosion. Only one claim was received.

Before the event, rumours predicted a tidal wave three to eighteen metres high and travelling as fast as 160 kilometres an hour. National Research Council measurements showed, however, that nothing spectacular happened. Whatever tidal wave there was petered out within a few kilometres.

By 9:32 A.M. on April 5, the tremor from the epicentre had subsided and the beautiful blossom of the explosion had withered away. The three-million-dollar firecracker had proven to be no misfire. It was indeed the best bang for the bucks. ⚜

Charles K. Hurst, who retired as chief engineer of Public Works of Canada in 1975, oversaw the demolition of Ripple Rock. He lives in Ottawa.

Have you had a personal experience with the great characters or momentous events of Canadian history? If you would like to submit a story for possible publication, send it to <editors@historysociety.ca> with YourStory in the subject line or write to YourStory, c/o *The Beaver*, 478-167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. For further information please see our editorial guidelines at <www.thebeaver.ca>.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2003 Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History Announced

The History Society is pleased to honour seven exceptional educators who have made the study of Canadian history a life-changing experience for their students. The selection process is rigorous, and we are grateful for the dedication of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, COED Communications, and especially our diligent judging panel.

Below, we present a brief snapshot of the unique approaches of this year's recipients. We hope it will evoke in you the comment heard around the judging table for all of the short-listed candidates – "Gee, I wish I / my kids had a history teacher like that!" This is the raison d'être for creating the awards program – to build a network of inspired and inspiring history teachers. One day we'd like to think every Canadian young person will have access to history teachers as great as these.

Susan Anderson and Sue Earles encourage hands-on work so their grades 4 and 5 students can appreciate their place in history. Their study unit "Tsawwassen and the Settlement of Ladner" includes prehistory lessons on the area's geography, student comparisons of their environment with that of the original First Nations inhabitants, and a simulated archaeological dig. "Early Pioneers of Delta, B.C." has students designing their own quilt, comparing settlers of different eras, and participating in a school "pioneer day."

Peter Bjornson is a legend in the Manitoba town of Gimli for community partnerships that get his students thinking "out of the books." His classes explore national and global connections to community stories. His students recreate trench warfare, have built a photo archive for the community newspaper, and designed heritage murals and a special collections library reflecting local Icelandic and Ukrainian heritage. Peter was also recently elected to the Manitoba Legislature as the MLA for Gimli.

Raymond Duchesne, a leader in professional development for teachers, is the author of a grade 10 Canadian and Quebec history workbook. His strategies include creating *situation-problèmes*, in which students, placed in fictitious scenarios, create songs, plays, kiosks, police investigations, and riddles. They are then encouraged to determine how historical knowledge helps them understand present realities. Raymond sees himself as a mediator so students can develop their own knowledge through research and inquiry.

Pam Irving of Millarville, Alberta, incorporates technology, art, and role-play into the history curriculum for her grades 2 and 3 students. In a year-long local history project, "The History of Millarville," students research and compose a report on one of the original homestead families using historical data, which they present to their fellow students. After combining their knowledge, they create a

Role playing in Millarville.

Museum Discounts Membership in Canada's National History Society provides reduced admission to the following leading Canadian museums:

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- Vancouver Maritime Museum
- Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff
- Glenbow Museum, Calgary
- Provincial Museum of Alberta, Edmonton
- Saskatchewan Western Development Museum, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Yorkton
- Dalnavert Museum, Winnipeg
- The Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg
- Western Canada Aviation Museum, Winnipeg
- Niagara Historical Society & Museum, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON
- Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto
- Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto
- McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal
- Pointe à Callière, Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Montréal
- Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, QC
- New Brunswick Museum, Saint John
- Yarmouth County Museum, Yarmouth, NS

A discount of at least 10 percent on regular admission will be given upon presentation of your membership card. Some restrictions may apply. All subscribers to the *Beaver* are automatically members of the Society.

mural that demonstrates the interactions between these families.

Deanna Millard gives students a first-hand sense of the experiences of the first European settlers to the New World with her lesson plan "Champlain's Order of Good Cheer." Her Kanata, Ontario, junior high-school class discusses and researches colonization and the fur trade and then reenacts the roles of natives and other characters from Port Royal. Deanna's students also research the development of New France and teach the rest of the class about their discoveries.

Gary Simons's approach to history is always personal. His lesson about the Great Depression, for example, encourages students to realize the gravity of suffering experienced by people in the 1930s. Students calculate a present-day family budget, then imagine budgeting if a depression occurred today. His leadership was instrumental in helping Thousand Islands Secondary students earn an Ontario Heritage award in 2000 for their creation of a historical mural at Brockville's VIA Rail station.

IN THIS ISSUE ...

The History Society's inaugural book supplement, Joie de Livre, offering news, reviews, and commentary on a wide range of history books and history bookmakers, and — in partnership with Parks Canada, for Canadian subscribers — a complimentary 2004 calendar featuring a selection of Canada's precious National Historic Sites.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY ARCHIVES

Punch clock. Made by W.A.

Cooperation between the postal service, the railway, and the retail industry over the last century and a half shrank Canada to a livable size. It allowed Canadians to live in comfort, and in contact with the world.

This connection is celebrated in a new exhibition, "Mail, Rail and Retail: Connecting Canadians," which opened November 21 at the Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec. The exhibition will stay there until the spring of 2004 and will then travel the country for at least two years.

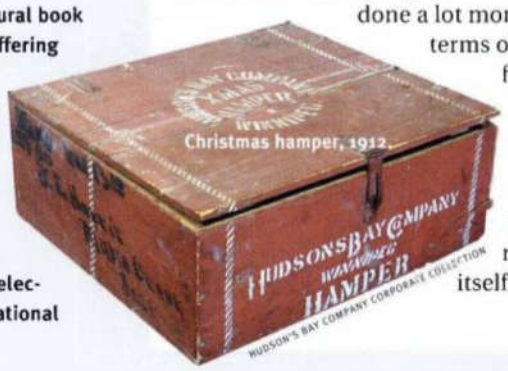
"A new story is being told," says Bianca Gendreau, curator of the Canadian Postal Museum / Canadian Museum of Civilization.

The exhibition is the result of an unprecedented collaboration between three iconic Canadian institutions and the museum. Canada Post Corporation, Canadian Pacific Railway, Hudson's Bay Company, and the Museum of Civilization are partners in the $1.2 million exhibition. Canada's National History Society is supporting the project's promotional efforts.

"We see ourselves in a way as custodians of part of this country's history and it's a way of exposing that," says Anne Buston, director of public relations at Canada Post.

The idea for "Mail, Rail and Retail" came from Hudson's Bay Company, says Brenda Hobbs, director of records and heritage at the company.

"We haven't really done a lot in terms of telling people about our historic role in retail," says Hobbs. "We've done a lot more in terms of the fur-trading history, but not with the retail itself."



Hudson's Bay Company asked the other two corporations to join in the planning, with the Canadian Museum of Civilization putting up the space and the expertise. "We found out that the success of one was interlocked with the others," says Gendreau. "The rail linked the geography. Then you were able to move the mail, and then the mail, because there were more people there, allowed the retail sector to expand."

Hudson's Bay Company focused on the fur trade for its first 200 years and, as part of its 1670 founding charter, was given ownership of much of present-day Canada. Under the 1869 Deed of Surrender, some of this HBC territory became Canadian property.

"The deed is almost as important as the Constitution in one regard," says Yanick Dubé, one of the team at Hudson's Bay Company working on the exhibition. "If that document hadn't been agreed to, Canada would not be anything like we know it today."

Part of that land was given to the new Canadian Pacific Railway in 1880. The government asked CPR to construct a railway to British Columbia, thus fulfilling a condition of Confederation in 1867.

"We worked with the post office almost from the very beginning," says Jonathan Hanna, corporate historian at CPR. "When we were building the railway, there was a post office that moved every day, called End of Track. For collectors, that's a very sought-after postmark."

Mail began moving by train in 1854, and soon, the mail cars were carrying money orders, mail, and packages to farms and towns. One object in the exhibition is the catch-post device that mail sorters on trains used to drop off mail – without stopping the train.

A new connection with retail came

Wood, Montreal, c.1945.

in the 1880s, with the introduction of mail-order catalogues. Among the artifacts in the exhibition are old catalogues and an old order box that collected orders from the Hudson's Bay Company catalogue. The exhibition includes audio clips of Canadians telling their own stories, stories that illustrate the importance of mail-order in the pre-Internet age.

"As long as you had a postal service, you'd be able to have anything that anyone in downtown Toronto or Montreal could have," says Hobbs. "That's a way of conquering the distance."

LORD Cultural Resources designed the exhibit. It takes up about 3,000 square feet and includes at least 120 artifacts: photographs of employees of the three organizations, documents, goods from catalogues, even a large mechanical CPR punch-clock.

Many items came from the archives of the sponsoring organizations.

"We tried to get this exhibition to show some of the objects from different collections that have never been seen," says Gendreau. "But the pieces are not only from corporate collections. We are showing things from a variety of Canadian archives and museums, like the City of Vancouver Archives, Glenbow Museum, and Canada Science and Technology Museum. The exhibit doesn't just address who is behind this part of history, but also how it developed."

Mail-O-Metre, The Automatic Stamp Affixing and Sealing Machine, c.1927.

But the team had to hunt for items such as personal photographs, oral histories, and the kinds of items people might have bought from catalogues a century ago, but didn't think to save.

"A good part of the fun we had was in finding the connections between the three companies," says Dubé.

For example, Sir Sandford Fleming designed the first Canadian postage stamp (the three-penny beaver). He also engineered the CPR line and was present at the driving of the Last Spike in 1885. The man who drove the Last Spike, Donald A. Smith, became governor of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The process of searching for artifacts triggered a discovery. The team decided that the Hudson's Bay Company Deed of Surrender should form part of the exhibit.

"We all thought it was in Winnipeg, but when we started looking around, no one could find it, " says Dubé. "So we located it in the national archives in England and are negotiating to bring it over to Canada."

A copy of the deed will be on display for the entire length of the exhibit, but organizers hope to offer visitors to the Gatineau exhibit a chance to see the original.

After the exhibition closes in Gatineau, the museum will help tour it, free of charge, to cities and towns all over Canada. The host towns can customize one section of the exhibition.

"Education is a big part of this, so a lot of the feet going through the door will be little ones," says Buston. The team has prepared an education packet for visiting school groups.

These days, Hudson's Bay Company uses Canada Post e-post services for billing, and uses CPR to transport goods. A hundred years hence, museums may be showcasing the continuing connection between these three icons.

"It's something hidden behind the scenes," says Dubé, "but it makes everything else possible."

—Kate Heartfield

Hudson's Bay Company Salutes

ROLPH HUBAND

Rolph Huband enjoyed an exceptional and unique career with an exceptional and unique Canadian company.

For the majority of his 38-year career with Hudson's Bay Company, which ended with his retirement in 1993 as vice-president and secretary, Mr. Huband was active in preserving the Company's commitment to its heritage. Under his stewardship, York Factory was transferred to Parks Canada (1968), the Nonsuch replica was given to the Manitoba Museum (1974), the Company's archives and museum collection were donated to the Province of Manitoba (1994) and, with the resultant tax savings, Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation was established to advance knowledge of and interest in Canadian history, and Canada's National History Society was created (1994) to popularize Canadian history and continue publishing the *Beaver*.

A visionary, Mr. Huband saw that all facets of the Company's historical legacy got new, good, permanent homes to preserve them for future generations to enjoy. In doing so, he has played a key role in preserving, protecting, and celebrating a significant part of Canada's past and developing public interest in Canadian history.

For these reasons he was made a member of the Order of Canada this year and Hudson's Bay Company salutes him for an honour well deserved.

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY
hbc
CANADA'S MERCHANTS SINCE 1670

Near Fort Walsh is Farwell's Trading Post where whiskey, guns, and furs were the staple commodities.

PARKS CANADA

THE MILD, MILD WEST

TOM FORD visits Saskatchewan's southwest corner, where the Mounties established law and order – in a peaceable way.

A lot of places can say they represent Canada's beautiful face. Only a few can claim to be a site of the nation's soul. One of them is southwestern Saskatchewan.

The region was Canada's Old West – badlands, bad men, cops, cowboys, and aboriginals. The United States had a Wild West; Canada had a mild west, not because the people involved were bland, but because they had the courage to try peaceful rather than violent solutions.

A good spot to begin your tour is where the North West Mounted Police started in what is now Saskatchewan: Fort Walsh, a National Historic Site with costumed interpreters just south of Maple Creek, 350 kilometres west of Regina. The whitewashed log fort nestled in the brown, undulating Cypress Hills is a replica of one built in 1875 by a flamboyant NWMP superintendent, James Morrow Walsh, and thirty men, about a year after the Mounties trekked west to assert Canadian sovereignty by enforcing our laws.

Walsh and Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer of the U.S. Seventh Cavalry exemplify the differences in the Canadian and U.S. West: Custer and 264 of his men were annihilated after they foolishly attacked Sitting Bull and the Lakota in 1876 in Montana, but Walsh became Sitting Bull's friend when he and more than four thousand Lakota fled to Canada seeking refuge after the battle of the Little Big Horn.

Just inside the fort's main gate, in a building representing Walsh's office, you get a sense of what it was like when Sitting Bull angrily refused American offers to take him back, and you can imagine Walsh's favourite riding habit – a slouch hat with the front brim turned up, a buckskin jacket with fringes and cavalry boots – stuffed into a corner.

Because of Sitting Bull, Fort Walsh became NWMP headquarters from 1878 to 1882. Near a fort bastion is a replica of the office of the commissioner, the force's highest ranking officer. Sitting Bull and the last of the Lakota left Canada in 1881 after Prime Minister John A. Macdonald had Walsh removed to another post because he thought the Mountie was too

Fort Walsh

PARKS CANADA

chummy with the old chief.

Fort Walsh was dismantled in 1882, but in its heyday it was the largest permanent centre between Winnipeg and Vancouver, with a population of nearly five thousand during special events. Traces of the community and two graveyards remain.

Near the fort are reproductions of two booze forts that made huge profits exchanging cheap rotgut (spiced with ink, tobacco, and a touch of strychnine to give you a really great hangover) for buffalo hides used to make expensive machinery belts. A few steps away is the field where a gang of wolfers killed thirty-six Assiniboines in 1873 in a drunken fight over stolen horses – a massacre that helped push Sir John A into creating the NWMP.

A two-and-a-half hour drive east of Fort Walsh are the remains of the old NWMP Wood Mountain Post: a few reconstructed buildings and some indentations in the ground. The site doesn't look like much, but nearby Walsh had his first meeting with Sitting Bull, an event burned into the minds of many Canadian school children.

Walsh, resplendent in his pillbox hat and red jacket, rode with six men into the camp of the Lakotas, North America's best light cavalry. He called a meeting, lectured the aboriginals on Canadian law, and seized some stolen ponies his scout happened to notice. The school stories often don't mention it, but Walsh got away with this because the Lakota also wanted peace. Sitting Bull liked to say he was a "British Indian" and loved displaying a George III medal he said had been given to an ancestor.

You can see what the country was like in the days of Walsh and Sitting Bull at Grasslands National Park, near Val Marie, one of North America's largest tracts of mixed grass prairie. If you want to go back even farther in time, visit Eastend (the east end of an old Mountie patrol) and its classy, new T. rex Discovery Centre, named after Scotty, a *Tyrannosaurus rex* fossil discovered in 1991 and one of the world's most complete.

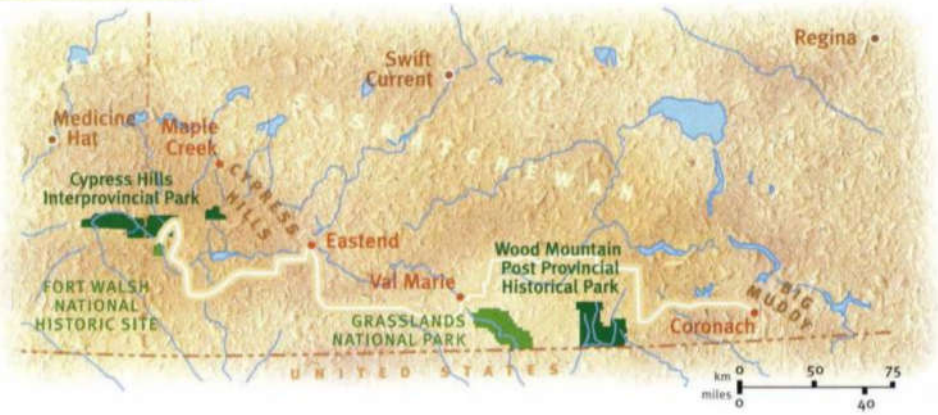
One of the baddest of the southwest's badlands is the Big Muddy, near Coronach, 162 kilometres east of Val Marie. In the late 1800s, it was station one in an outlaw escape route, supposedly set up by Butch Cassidy, that ran all the way to Mexico. Sam Kelly, a Canadian rustler and train robber, dug caves into the Big Muddy's sides for himself and his horses. On a guided tour you can see Kelly's caves, preserved thanks to some wooden supports local entrepreneurs put in to hold them up.

The southwest's most striking feature, however, is its geography. As Eastend's Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Wallace Stegner wrote: "The world is flat, empty, nearly abstract, and in its flatness you are a challenging upright thing ... . It is a country to breed mystical people, egocentric people, perhaps poetic people. But not humble ones."

Just the kind of people who could help develop a nation's soul.

Tom Ford is managing editor of The Issues Network, a writers' group that supplies columns on current events to Canadian dailies. He lives in Winnipeg.

IF YOU GO ...



DAWN HUCK

For information on places to see, accommodations, and special events contact:

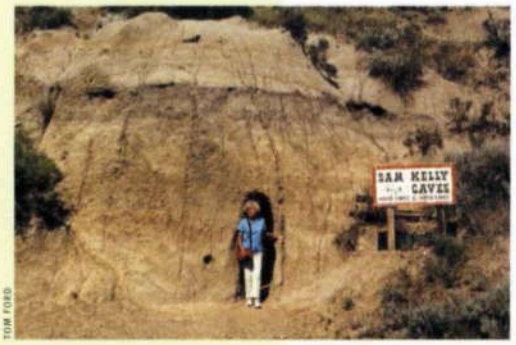
Tourism Saskatchewan
1922 Park St.
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7
T: (877) 237-2273
E: travel.info@sask tourism.com

Fort Walsh National Historic Site
Box 278
Maple Creek,
Saskatchewan S0N 1N0
T: (306) 662-2645
E: fort_walsh@pch.gc.ca

Eastend T. rex Discovery Centre
Box 646
Eastend, Saskatchewan
S0N 0T0
T: (306) 295-4009
E: ecta@sk.sympatico.ca

Grasslands National Park
Box 150
Val Marie, Saskatchewan
S0N 2T0
T: (306) 298-2257

Big Muddy guided tours
Coronach and District Tours
Box 722
Coronach,
Saskatchewan S0H 0Z0
T: (306) 267-3312
E: townoffice@ coronach.ca

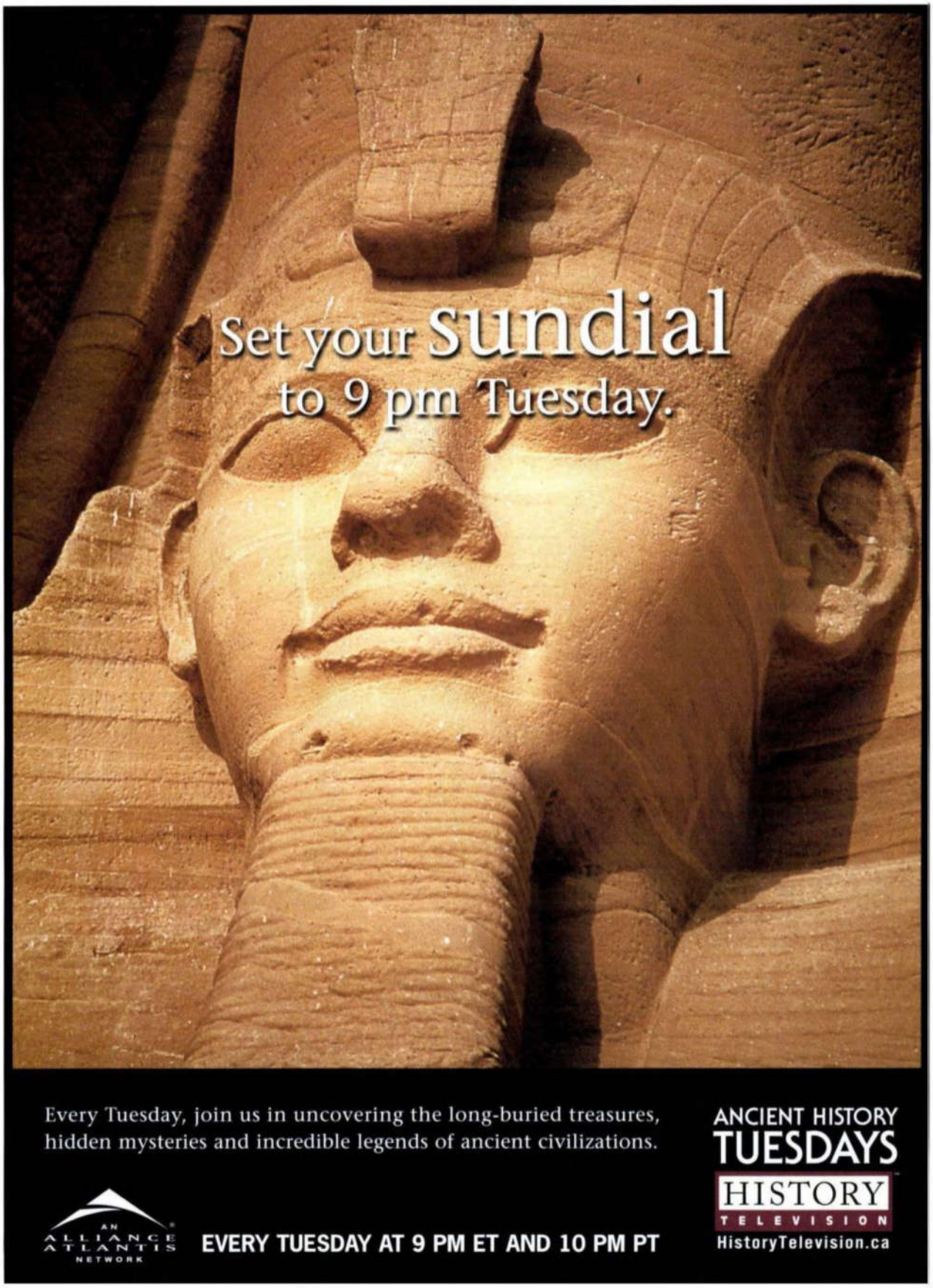


TOM FORD

Wray Berger, who submitted this photograph to the *Beaver*, is Matthew Berger's father. Wray, seventy-seven, is retired from Kroehler's and lives in Stratford, Ontario. Matthew, who turns forty-five this month, owns an antique store on Toronto's Yonge Street. Asked if Matthew has been a good boy as Santa requested, his father replied, "Oh, yes. Relatively good."

Santa It's not hard to figure out what message Santa is conveying to Matthew Berger, who, it turns out, will be two years old the day after this picture it taken, December 16, 1960. It is, perhaps, Santa's best-known directive. The wagging finger may be a bit stern, but George Feick, who played Santa Claus every year at the annual Kroehler Manufacturing Company Christmas party at Stratford City Hall, is reliably reported to have been the perfect jolly old St. Nick, not one to upset a child. Still, Matthew, who has just received a snappy toy car from the merry gentleman, is not responding happily. "Now, be a good boy," Santa says. Matthew considers the road ahead.

Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in our country's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied at your local photo shop (please don't send priceless originals) and send it to: Album, c/o *The Beaver*, #478–167 Lombard Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your copy returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



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December | January Highlights

Top Gun Week | December 13 to 19 at 9 pm ET

History Television presents a special week of high-flying adventure with a look at legendary fighter pilots, revolutionary aircraft and famous dogfights. The week will also commemorate the 100th anniversary of flight with special documentaries about the first manned flight by the Wright Brothers, and a look at Canadian aviation pioneer Mabel Bell – the true force behind the first flight in Canada.

7 Docs For 7 Films | December 29 to January 4 at 8 pm ET

This week, History Television matches up Hollywood's interpretation of a historical person or event with the "true story" – a documentary on the same subject. The week features such pairings as **The Real Spartacus** and **Spartacus** (1960), **Battlefield Detectives: Vietnam** and **Platoon** (1986), and **Pol Pot** and **The Killing Fields** (1984).

Quest for the Sea | Begins Sunday, January 5 at 7 pm ET

This living-history series follows ten people as they return to a lost way of life in a remote fishing community on the south coast of Newfoundland. In a simple wooden home with only the tools, clothing and supplies of the 1930s, they will rely on cod fishing for their sustenance and survival.

Modern History Mondays | Mondays at 9 pm ET

Every Monday evening History Television chronicles the people, events and conflicts that have changed the face of history and shaped the modern era. With world-renowned compelling documentaries **Modern History Mondays** provide startling new insights and a unique perspective on our world. Upcoming documentaries include **John Paul II, Tesla: Master of Lightning** and **Robinson Crusoe: The True Story.**

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